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# ORDER OR DISORDER?

Studies in the Decline of  
International Order, 1918-1936



# ORDER OR DISORDER?

Studies in the Decline of International Order  
1918-1936

By

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## PREFACE

THIS attempt to present a brief survey of the international situation requires that the reader should be informed of its origin, the angle of view of the writer, the scope of the survey, and the method of presentation. These are as follows :—

1. The writer, recently retired from service overseas, felt impelled to study for his own information the causes of what appeared to be a definite decline of the whole system of international order in Europe, something new and even more momentous than a state of international tension involving the danger of war.

2. The only effective method of making a thorough study of any subject is to do so by writing, and not only by reading ; and the pages which follow are the outcome of this study. The narrative, which is fully documented, is taken of set purpose from original published official sources, and not from compilations where the information has been, so to speak, already predigested.

3. The contents of this volume thus present what was compiled as a personal study, and they are only printed because friends to whom they have been shown have reported that they found enlightenment in a situation which is admittedly bewildering.

4. The facts in whatever matter may be under investigation must be squarely faced, and the inferences which may reasonably be drawn from them must be frankly accepted even if unpalatable.



5. In the particular case of the situation prevailing in Europe to-day, the only hope of achieving a solution lies in full comprehension by the people of this country of the course of events which has brought about this situation. Public opinion here is still a powerful force, though it must become steadily weaker as the situation becomes more complex and difficult to follow; and the Government is still influential abroad, and amenable to public opinion at home.

6. If it is a fact that the whole basis of international order and conduct has got into a decline in recent years the remedy must obviously take some other form than the mere acceptance and stabilization of the consequences of this decline. Standards of conduct that have been lowered must be restored, unwise steps that have been taken must be retraced, and where grave wrongs have been done all possible amend should be made. The situation will not be corrected by continuing to apply the standards of conduct and the methods of procedure which have created it.

7. As will appear towards the conclusion of this survey, international order in Europe had by the summer and autumn of 1936 declined almost to zero. A long sequence of published diplomatic exchanges came to an end. Subsequent events such as the so-called civil war in Spain, the rape of Austria and the crushing of Czechoslovakia, are manifestations of anarchy, rather than steps in the decline of order. These studies are concerned with the causes and not the consequences of decline, and the autumn of 1936 thus ends the phase of post-war history which this survey endeavours to cover. No attempt is made to present "hot news" up to date.

8. The Italian war against Ethiopia cannot be regarded as a minor colonial campaign to be disposed of by diplomatic acknowledgment followed by oblivion in Europe.

It was this incident more than any other that finally precipitated the breakdown of European order and shattered collective security and the League of Nations. It forms the subject of the first of the two studies comprised in this survey, and it illustrates only too clearly some of the causes which have brought Europe to the brink of disaster, and the standards of international conduct which, as it seems to the writer, must be entirely abandoned if civilization is to continue.

9. The situation in Europe, the development of which since 1918 forms the subject of the second study, will not be understood unless the handling of the Ethiopian affair is fully understood. This incident was far more serious for Europe than for Africa, for the Englishman than for the Ethiopian, and it is still a live issue for all but the immediate victims.

10. It is the proclaimed intention of the British Government to base a policy of European appeasement upon the formal recognition of the fruition of this act of aggression, and thus to treat as acceptable international conduct an act of international turpitude probably unique in history. The ultimate consequences of setting up such a precedent no man can foresee.

11. The two studies are to a great extent self-contained, but the first is definitely intended to serve as an introduction to the second, though its narrative starts much later. Where the two narratives overlap, each is projected against the background of the other. This arrangement accords with the actual facts, as there was a close inter-action between the two trains of events, and it therefore should not mar the unity of the combined narrative comprised in the two studies. It is hoped that the reader will not skip the Ethiopian story, and the conclusions drawn from it, as

ancient history of no further interest, and of no practical importance.

12. The writer has no affinities with any political party, and has been actuated by no motive in the first instance other than to ascertain the truth for himself; and, as a secondary consideration, unforeseen when the studies were started, to present the results to a circle of readers. The fact that these are the genuine studies of one who sought understanding for himself may perhaps make them interesting and enlightening to others.

13. It is the firm conviction of the writer that the circumstances of the time demand a calm scrutiny of facts, with an outlook as impartial as is humanly possible. This survey, brief though it is, covers a series of momentous events, and no contemporary effort to interpret, their origin and consequences can claim infallibility. Nevertheless the facts exist, and their comprehension is necessitated by the very circumstances which make their interpretation difficult. The interpreter can do no more than apply industry and sincerity to his task, in examining matters which concern every man, woman and child now living. In the pages which follow this has been done.

December 1938.

*The postscript at p. 184 should be read in continuation of this preface.*

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*FIRST STUDY*

ITALIAN ATTACK ON ETHIOPIA

December 1937



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

IN the light of current events it is hardly necessary to draw attention to the decay of international order in recent years. Alarms and excursions, and preparations for war continue to spread disquietude throughout an ever-expanding area. From day to day a growing proportion of the population of important countries is being drawn into the fighting services, or into industrial and other activities arising from military preparations. The League of Nations, conceived by statesmen and accepted by peoples less than twenty years ago as a necessary part of world order, and as the chief hope for the survival of civilization, has sustained a great loss of influence in the last few years. Worse still, the repudiation of agreements, even those entered into without any element of duress, has become so widespread as to call into question the sanctity of those still nominally in force, and to make it doubtful in advance whether any that might be made in future would be honourably observed.

Negotiations are undertaken, conferences are held, and committees are set in motion ; but so far no signs of real appeasement are visible in any quarter of the darkening horizon, though a more favourable impression may be produced momentarily by periods of relaxation in the surface tension. The state-craft of those who challenge the existing order seems to be conducted with more foresight and resolution, and thus with more success, than that of the nations who seek to preserve peace. Refusal to be bound



by any covenant or treaty in restraint of aggression is accompanied by an increasing tendency to reject all previously accepted rules for the conduct of war. Non-combatants are assailed with every available weapon, and the Red Cross has been deliberately violated. Public opinion becomes increasingly tolerant of actions which a few years ago would have been regarded as unspeakable outrages, and our statesmen are increasingly prone to reflect this attitude; or is it that the public reflects the tolerance of the statesmen? In a speech on the 8th October, 1937, the Prime Minister spoke of "Cruelty and barbarity, the mutilation and death of non-combatants" as being "the inevitable accompaniments of modern war." Must we acquiesce in such abomination and folly?

The hyena and the jackal do not destroy the female and young of their own species. They have enough sense not to commit mass suicide. Must we now admit that the people of Europe have become not only more cruel but also more stupid than wild beasts? If not, how comes it that we are all building bombing fleets whose chief victims in warfare may be the civil population? The fact is that we can have modern civilization or modern war, but we cannot have both; and the time still left to us for a final choice between them is shrinking fast. Somehow or other the present drift towards war must be arrested and reversed; otherwise the material components of European civilization must inevitably perish in bursting bombs, clouds of poison gas, and the wreckage of falling and blazing buildings. Its moral and intellectual components must have already gone far on the road to dissolution, or it would be impossible to write in these terms.

The so-called civil war in Spain must obviously be a source of embarrassment to statesmen attempting to

extricate Europe from its difficulties and dangers. Here Italian regular forces fully equipped, and in their own military formations, are fighting against the official and internationally recognized government of Spain, and it is held necessary to allude to them as "volunteers," a term obviously pertaining only to those who may have joined either side from individual conviction or love of adventure. It is said that similar "volunteers" are to be found fighting on the other side; and the term civil war as hitherto understood is by no means an accurate description of what has been taking place in Spain for the past two years. Nor indeed is the term "non-intervention" a very accurate description of the attitude of other Powers. The need, or the supposed need, for maintaining a fictitious view of the war in Spain must add to the difficulty of any move towards appeasement in Europe, or even of initiating any discussion with that object.

In taking note of these embarrassments, however, we ourselves have no right to adopt an attitude of superior virtue. Our own departures from the path of wisdom and rectitude have been almost as serious as any, and perhaps less excusable than some. Recognition of this fact, however painful it may be, seems a necessary preliminary to any move towards restoring the harmony of Europe. The factor which more than any other precipitated the present state of international disharmony in Europe was the Italian aggression against Ethiopia; and the first of the two studies comprised within this volume is concerned primarily with the period of about twelve months preceding the actual invasion of the country by Italian forces. It was during this phase that the three great Powers immediately concerned appear to have departed most conspicuously from previously accepted but unwritten standards of

international conduct, besides inflicting on the League of Nations, and on the code embodied in its statutes, what may well prove to have been a mortal injury. An understanding of how all this has come about is surely a necessary step towards the reconstitution of international order; and an objective and documented presentation of this particular sequence of events may well engage our attention.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COURSE OF THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE

Derived from the Report of the Council of the League of Nations dated 7th October, 1935, published as White Paper Cmd. 5071.

ON the 23rd November, 1934, an Anglo-Ethiopian Joint Boundary Commission visited Wal Wal on work connected with the delimitation of the frontier between Ethiopia and British Somaliland, and found an Italian force in occupation. To quote the report :—

Following various incidents, the Commission had withdrawn on the 25th November, without its escort. After its departure an engagement took place on the 5th December between the Italian and Ethiopian troops. Other incidents followed. Each of the two Governments protested to the other, holding it responsible.

The matter was brought officially to the notice of the League by a telegram from the Ethiopian Government dated 14th December, 1934. Diplomatic exchanges had already taken place between the two Governments, Italy demanding indemnity and apology for an alleged act of aggression against an Italian post, and Ethiopia offering *arbitration and alleging trespass in Ethiopian territory*. Apart from their obligations under the Covenant of the League and the Kellogg pact, the parties were mutually bound by a Treaty of Amity, Conciliation and Friendship entered into on the 2nd August, 1928. Under this treaty the two Powers mutually promised each other “ constant

peace and perpetual friendship," and undertook "not to engage under any pretext in action calculated to injure or prejudice the independence" of the other party. They also undertook "to submit to a procedure of conciliation and arbitration disputes which may arise between them and which it may not be possible to settle by ordinary diplomatic methods, without having recourse to armed force."

The Ethiopian Government's endeavours to invoke the provisions of this treaty were repelled by the Italian Government; and on the 3rd January, 1935, they formally appealed to the League invoking the application of Article 11 of the Covenant. This article reads as follows :—

Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise, the Secretary-General shall, on the request of any Member of the League, forthwith summon a meeting of the Council. . . .

No emergency meeting was needed in this case, as a session of the Council was due to open on the 11th January. At the opening of the session, the Ethiopian Government intimated through their representative that they reserved the right to ask that the question be brought on the agenda during that same session. This right was exercised on the 15th and the question was placed on the agenda on the 17th.

Efforts at pacification led to agreement between the parties to apply the terms of the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1928, which, as explained in the Council's Report (Section I, para. 13), laid down a procedure in three stages, viz., direct negotiations, conciliation, arbitration, in that order. The two Governments also agreed to establish a neutral

zone in the Wal Wal area. On the supposition that this procedure would be effective, and in deference to the Italian Government's opposition, the Council refrained from intervention.

On the 16th and 17th March the Ethiopian Government, complaining that no progress was being made on the lines of the agreed procedure, that the Italian attitude was unconciliatory, and that Italian military preparations were in progress, demanded the intervention of the League under Article 15 of the Covenant. The Italian Government, on the other hand, represented that the conciliation procedure was still in progress, that their military preparations were defensive measures necessitated by those of the Ethiopian Government on a much larger scale, and objected to the application of Article 15 of the Covenant.

An extraordinary session of the Council opened on the 15th April, and it was debated whether the Italo-Ethiopian question should be placed on the agenda of this meeting or whether it should remain on the agenda of the next ordinary session in May. (The Ethiopian Government urged immediate consideration, whilst the Italian Government pressed for continuation of the procedure of the 1928 Treaty. Under Article 15 any party to a dispute may effect its submission to the League "by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the Secretary-General who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof." The duty is imposed on the Council of attempting to effect a settlement and "if the dispute is not thus settled, the Council, either unanimously or by a majority vote, shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto."

(The attitude of the Italian Government at this stage is not made quite clear in the report of the Committee. It appears (para. 17) that the Italian Government, whilst desiring to continue direct negotiations, i.e., the first stage of the procedure, were prepared to embark on conciliation and arbitration, i.e., the second and third stages of the procedure. On the other hand they objected to the proposal of the Ethiopian Government that a day should be fixed for the nomination of arbitrators, and to the proposal of the United Kingdom's representative that the arbitrators should be appointed and the terms of reference fixed before the Council's ordinary session in May. Presumably it was not the procedure, but the intervention of others, including the League Council, to which the Italian Government objected.)

The Committee's account of this meeting concludes: "After this exchange of views the Council decided that the question should remain on the agenda of its ordinary session in May."

Further difficulties arose, notably in regard to the representatives chosen by the Ethiopian Government, the Italian Government demanding that they should be of Ethiopian nationality. At the meeting of the Council which opened on the 20th May, the Emperor in a telegram again denounced Italian military preparations, and stated that Italy objected to the arbitrators dealing with the interpretation of the 1908 Treaty (defining the frontier). He asked that the Council should stop Italy's military measures and that Article 15 of the Covenant should be applied if the objection to the arbitrators' dealing with the 1908 Treaty were maintained.

On the 25th May the Council adopted a resolution designed to ensure settlement of the dispute by the 25th

August, and a second resolution providing for a further meeting of the Council if by the 25th July the arbitrators should have failed either to settle the dispute or to agree as to the selection of a fifth arbitrator. It also decided to meet to examine the situation if a settlement had not taken place by the 25th August.

At the meeting of the 25th May the Ethiopian Government continued to protest against Italian military preparations, and the Italian Government continued to justify them. On the 19th June the Ethiopian Government again protested against the despatch of troops and munitions to East Africa to the accompaniment of inflammatory and minatory speeches. On the 9th July the Ethiopian Government's Agent informed the Council that the work of the Conciliation Commission had been interrupted, the Italian Government's Agent having objected to the question of the "ownership" of Wal Wal being brought into discussion. The Italian arbitrators had proposed to suspend the proceedings until the 20th July to give an opportunity for the two Governments to settle this point. The Ethiopian arbitrators on the other hand had urged the appointment of a fifth arbitrator.

In view of this deadlock, and of their second resolution at the May session, the Council was convened in special session on the 31st July. On considering the proceedings of the 25th May the Council by a resolution of the 3rd August ruled that the Commission's terms of reference did not cover the question of frontiers. Thus the question of the ownership of Wal Wal was excluded from discussion. The two parties agreed that the four members of the Commission of Conciliation and Arbitration should forthwith select a fifth arbitrator. Paragraph 24 of the Council's Report concludes as follows :—



Confident that the procedure would have brought about a settlement before the 1st September, the Council invited the two Governments to inform it of the results not later than the 4th September.

At the Council Meeting of the 3rd August the representative of the United Kingdom announced that conversations would very shortly take place between France, Italy and the United Kingdom. He stated that a communiqué had been published that day as follows :—

The representatives of the Governments of the United Kingdom, France and Italy, having met together at Geneva on the 1st August, 1935 ;

In view of the fact that the three Powers, signatories of the treaty on the 13th December, 1906, concerning Ethiopia, have already declared themselves ready to enter into negotiations among themselves with a view to facilitating a solution of the differences existing between Italy and Ethiopia ;

Have agreed to open these conversations at the earliest possible date.

The Council's report records that :

According to the statement made by the United Kingdom representative at the Council Meeting on the 4th September, the negotiations between the three Powers began at Paris on the 16th August, after two days of informal exchange of views.

The delegates of the United Kingdom and France drew up certain proposals which are reproduced as Appendix I of the League Council's report. Their nature is described as follows :—

These suggestions essentially consisted in a plan of collective assistance to Ethiopia to help her, under the auspices of the League of Nations, to carry out certain

reforms. Ethiopia was to accept this plan of her own free will. Assistance would have been afforded by the three limitrophe Powers, but this would not have prevented particular account being taken of the special interests of Italy, without prejudice to the recognized rights of France and the United Kingdom.

It was recorded that :

These suggestions were only of an exploratory nature, and were not intended in any degree to commit the Governments concerned.

These suggestions, made on the 16th August, having been summarily rejected by the Italian Government, the Paris conversations were adjourned on the 18th August.

The Commission of Conciliation resumed work on the 20th August, and appointed the fifth arbitrator. His intervention was invoked on the 29th, and on the 3rd September the Commission "taking into account the limits of its powers under the resolution adopted by the Council on the 3rd August" found unanimously that neither party was to blame for the Wal Wal or any subsequent incidents.

By a second resolution on the 3rd August the Council "decided that on the 4th September it would undertake a general examination, in their various aspects, of the relations between Italy and Ethiopia." The Italian representative abstained from voting on this resolution. The Ethiopian representative, on behalf of his Government, expressed the hope that this examination would lead to the establishment of "permanent, friendly and trustful relations between Ethiopia and Italy."

Pursuant to this resolution, the Council on the 6th September "decided to appoint a Committee to make a general examination of Italo-Ethiopian relations and to seek for a pacific settlement,"

This Committee of Five formulated certain proposals which they communicated to the Ethiopian and Italian representatives on the 18th September. These are published as a White Paper, Cmd. 5044. In putting forward their proposals, the Committee based themselves on a speech of the Ethiopian delegate at the plenary meeting of the League on the 11th September, in which he stated that Ethiopia would welcome the assistance of the League in any measures calculated to raise the economic, financial and political level of Ethiopia.

In these circumstances [the Committee reported], it appears to be the duty of the League of Nations to offer to extend to the Ethiopian Government collaboration and assistance on a collective international basis, so as to enable the latter resolutely to undertake the wide measures of constructive action necessary, not only to improve the lot of the Ethiopian people and to develop the natural resources of the country, but also to enable the Empire to live in harmony with its neighbours.

In substance the proposals of the Committee of Five provided for the almost complete administration of Ethiopia by a body of foreign specialists to be appointed and directed by the Council of the League. No territorial or other advantages were proposed for Italy at the expense of Ethiopia, but the Committee recorded that both the British and French Governments were ready to make certain sacrifices if these would facilitate territorial adjustments between Italy and Ethiopia. The proposals were presented to the parties on the 18th September, and were accepted in writing by the Ethiopian Government as a basis of negotiation. They were rejected orally in vigorous terms by the Italian Government.

The Committee then proceeded to draw up its report.

This was submitted on the 5th, and adopted by the Council of the League on the 7th October, 1935. The invasion of Abyssinia had begun on the 3rd October.

The Council's report concludes with a general statement of the course of the dispute, from which the following has been abstracted :

21. Whatever may have been its grievances against Ethiopia, the Italian Government had not, previously to the 4th September last, submitted them to the organs of the League. Had they been laid before it, the Council would certainly have endeavoured to remedy the situation. Moreover, after the entry into force of the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of the 2nd August, 1928, Italy could, if she preferred it, have recourse for all litigious questions to the procedure of conciliation and arbitration provided for in article 5 of that treaty. At the request of Ethiopia, that procedure was applied for the settlement of the Wal Wal affair. Italy, declaring at the outset that she was the victim of an aggression, demanded apologies and compensation without any previous enquiry. She agreed later that the procedure for arbitration should follow its course.

22. . . .

23. The suggestions of the Committee of Five were accepted, in principle, by the Ethiopian Government. If they were rejected by the Italian Government, it was "in as much as they did not offer a minimum basis sufficient for conclusive realization which would finally and effectively take into account the rights and the vital interests of Italy." In his oral observations, the Italian representative complained that the Committee of Five had completely neglected "the Italian reasons based on treaties, historical facts, the defence of the Italian colonies

and Italy's mission in Africa." The Committee of Five, he added, should have taken account of "the peculiar situation of Italy in Ethiopia in consequence of the Tripartite Treaty of 1906 and the previous agreements which form an integral part thereof. . . . It ought to have considered the territorial rights granted to Italy by Article 4, paragraph (b), of the Tripartite Treaty—i.e., the right to a junction between the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland to the west of Addis Ababa." Moreover, "the different peoples which are subject to the tyranny of Abyssinia and live on the frontiers of the country under inhuman conditions" should have been rescued therefrom.

The Committee of Five's plan had necessarily to be based upon the principles of the Covenant, of the Pact of Paris, and also of the treaties which Italy had concluded with Ethiopia, more particularly the Treaty of Amity of 1928. Any solution of the problem of Italo-Ethiopian relations had to be founded on the respect due to the independence, territorial integrity and security of all the States members of the League.

24. The Italian memorandum was laid on the Council table on the 4th September, 1935, whereas Ethiopia's first appeal to the Council had been made on the 14th December, 1934. In the interval between these two dates, the Italian Government opposed the consideration of the question by the Council on the ground that the only appropriate procedure was that provided for in the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1928. Throughout the whole of that period, moreover, the despatch of Italian troops to East Africa was proceeding. These shipments of troops were represented to the Council by the Italian Government as necessary for the defence of its colonies

menaced by Ethiopia's military preparations. Ethiopia, on the contrary, drew attention to the official pronouncements made in Italy, which, in its opinion, left no doubt "as to the hostile intentions of the Italian Government."

25. From the outset of the dispute, the Ethiopian Government has sought a settlement by peaceful means. It has appealed to the procedures of the Covenant. The Italian Government desiring to keep strictly to the procedure of the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1928, the Ethiopian Government assented; it invariably stated that it would faithfully carry out the arbitral award, even if the decision went against it. It agreed that the question of the ownership of Wal Wal should not be dealt with by the arbitrators, because the Italian Government would not agree to such a course. It asked the Council to despatch neutral observers and offered to lend itself to any enquiries upon which the Council might decide.

26. Once the Wal Wal dispute had been settled by arbitration, however, the Italian Government submitted its detailed memorandum to the Council in support of its claim to liberty of action. It asserted that a case like that of Ethiopia cannot be dealt with by the means provided by the Covenant.

It stated that, "since this question affects vital interests and is of primary importance to Italian security and civilization," it "would be failing in its most elementary duty, did it not cease once and for all to place any confidence in Ethiopia, reserving full liberty to adopt any measures that may become necessary to ensure the safety of its colonies and to safeguard its own interests."

Such are the circumstances in which hostilities have broken out between Ethiopia and Italy.

## CHAPTER III

### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

THE Council's report forms a summary of its own proceedings, and contains no reference to a number of concurrent events and relevant facts bearing on the issues before it. The more notable of these will now be cited.

1. According to Italian Government official maps, prior to 1935, Wal Wal was some seventy miles inside the boundary of Ethiopian territory. Marshal de Bono's book quite frankly reproduces this map. The maps now in general use, which show no boundary in this region, were not published until 1935, after the incident at Wal Wal.

2. An account of the incidents at Wal Wal on the 23rd November and the following few days was furnished to the League of Nations by the Commission, the British delegation on which was headed by Col. Clifford, R.E. The Italian Officer in charge at Wal Wal was said to be unaccommodating and discourteous. In a written note to the Commission he referred to the Ethiopian Commander as "Chief Bandit." Italian aeroplanes were flown over the Commission with a machine gun trained on the members of the staff. (League of Nations Document C.49. M.22, 1935, VII pp. 17-19.)

3. On the 3rd January, 1935, the Foreign Minister of France, M. Laval, left Paris for Rome, and on the 7th he signed an agreement with the Italian Government. The full details of this have never been made public, but official announcements were made showing that it com-

prised some abandonment of Italian claims in Tunis, the cession to Italy of a small piece of territory in French Somaliland, and of shares in the Jibuti-Addis Ababa Railway. A large tract of the Lybian desert was also ceded to Italy. This agreement must have had a direct bearing on Italian aims in Ethiopia, and it is impossible to disbelieve that Italy was given a free hand to carry out her plans. These concessions were accepted by Italy as a full settlement of her claims against France, arising out of the Treaty of 1915, when she joined the Allies in the Great War. The actual value of these concessions was negligible, and it cannot be believed that Signor Mussolini would have accepted them without a make-weight of real value (see also p. 40).

4. On the 11th January M. Laval arrived in Geneva to attend the meeting of the League Council, one of the chief duties of which would be to deal with the appeal of Ethiopia, which had been lodged at Geneva on the same day that he had left Paris for Rome.

5. "On the 29th January the Italian Government, in bringing the substance of this agreement informally to the notice of His Majesty's Government through the Italian Embassy in London, intimated that they would be glad to exchange views with the United Kingdom concerning the mutual and harmonious development of British and Italian interests in Abyssinia." (Sir Samuel Hoare, Foreign Secretary, in the House of Commons, 22nd October, 1935, *Hansard*.)

The Foreign Secretary went on to say that the British Government had returned no answer to this overture, but that they had appointed a Committee to consider the question.

6. At this time, or very soon afterwards, the Italian Government suspended the civil administration of the two



East African territories, and the civilian governors were withdrawn. General Graziani was appointed Governor of Italian Somaliland, and Marshal de Bono was appointed Governor of Eritrea and Governor General of the two colonies combined. These were the commanders of the two armies of invasion. Marshal de Bono had been promised this command in 1933. (*The Conquest of an Empire*, Marshal de Bono.)

7. On the 11th February the Italian Government announced the mobilization of two Divisions. (*Royal Institute of International Affairs. Abyssinia and Italy*, Third Edition, p. 32.) From then onwards military preparations in Italy proceeded intensively to the accompaniment of increasingly bellicose propaganda.

8. In April a conference was held at Stresa to consider the situation created by the German repudiation of the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty on the 16th March. It was attended by Signor Mussolini, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Sir John Simon, M. Claudin, and M. Laval. The Ethiopian question was not mentioned. At the close of the conference a communiqué was issued stating that the maintenance of peace in Europe, within the framework of the League, was the policy of the three Powers.

9. At the end of June Mr. Anthony Eden visited Rome in an effort to effect a settlement. Italy was to receive extensive territorial and other concessions in Abyssinia, and the latter was to be compensated by the cession of the port of Zeila in British Somaliland. These suggestions were rejected.

10. From early June onwards an anti-British propaganda campaign was carried on in Italy and also in the Near East; and Italian military dispositions were made of a nature which clearly threatened British territorial and other interests.

11. On joining the League Ethiopia undertook to enter the Arms Convention governing the supply of arms to backward or subject races. Accordingly she signed a treaty in August 1930 with the United Kingdom, France and Italy, whereby only the central government could import arms. (Treaty series No. 10 (1932). Cmd. 4051.) Ethiopia being a feudal country was largely dependent for its defence upon the armed retainers of the feudal chieftains, who by this treaty were deprived of the power of arming themselves. Almost immediately Italy must have begun to violate the frontier, since the Italian representative argued before the Council of the League that Italian troops had been in occupation of Wal Wal for some years before 1934. Within little more than five years of the signing of this treaty Italy had invaded Ethiopia with the previous knowledge of the other two signatories and of the League of Nations. It was of the essence of this agreement that Ethiopia had the same right to obtain arms as any other sovereign state. Yet in 1935 this right was denied by two of these Powers, whilst the third was engaged in assembling upon the frontiers of Ethiopia the men and materials for invasion on an overwhelming scale.

12. In view of rumours which had been current for some months before the Wal Wal incident, a joint re-affirmation of the 1928 treaty of friendship was issued in Rome on 29th September, 1934. More interest was being taken in this matter in America than in London, and rumours of an impending Italian aggression against Ethiopia had already been the subject of leading articles in important newspapers, e.g., *Herald-Tribune*, September 10th, and *New York Sun*, September 17th. The joint communiqué is given in the following message which appeared in many papers in the U.S.A.

Rome, Sept. 29 (A.P.) A mutual expression of an attitude of friendship and non-aggression was issued by Italy and Abyssinia in an official statement here to-day.

The statement was an answer to rumors that have circulated in Italy in the last two months over a possible Italian expedition into Abyssinia and a possible Abyssinian attack on the adjoining Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland.

The rumors arose after Italy had begun to reinforce considerably the military forces in the colonies, while Abyssinia built up a formidable army under the direction of a Belgian military mission.

The announcement read :

“ The Ethiopian Charge d’Affaires, Nagadras Afa-work, has communicated to the Italian Government that he has been authorized by His Majesty Haile Selassie, Emperor of Abyssinia, to declare formally that the Imperial Government of Ethiopia has never had and does not now have any intentions of aggression against Italy and intends to conform in the most absolute manner to the letter and the spirit of the Italian and Ethiopian treaty of friendship of 1928, not having any motive to disturb the good and friendly relations existing between the two governments.

“ In taking note of this communication, the Italian Government has replied to the Charge d’Affaires of Ethiopia that Italy does not have any intention that is not friendly toward the Ethiopian Government, with whom we are bound by the treaty of friendship of 1928.

“ Italy intends to continue to cultivate with Ethiopia the most friendly relations as a necessary means of augmenting reciprocal, political and economic relations.”

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NARRATIVE OF MARSHAL DE BONO

#### Extracts from *Anno XIII*

#### *The Conquest of An Empire. Marshal de Bono*

(p. 7.) "In 1932 nothing definite had as yet been settled as regards the character and method of a possible campaign against the probable enemy, nor in respect of the force which might have to be employed."

(p. 10.) "If we intended to assume the offensive, the initiative would be wholly on our side and at first sight it seemed that all that was needed was to fix the date for beginning operations. However, even in the case of an offensive war one must always allow for what the enemy can and will endeavour to do. Now the Abyssinians, under a feudal government, had the advantage of a comparatively rapid mobilization, when one considers that a good part of our forces and *all* materials and munitions of war had to be sent from the Mother country and would be retarded by having to pass through the Suez Canal.

"No unusual movement of arms and troops could avoid passing through the Canal, where, one may say, it would be exposed to the espionage of all the nations of Europe.

"This being so, the incontestable advantage of our superiority in every military sense would be largely paralysed, since we should not be able to reckon on the

factor of *surprise*, of capital importance in all military operations, and above all in an offensive war.

"A very brief calculation, made under my direction in the Colonial Ministry, gave us the approximate strength of the forces required for an offensive war; which was roughly equal to the strength that afterwards proved to be necessary."

(p. 13.) "*From this moment the Duce was definitely of the opinion that the matter would have to be settled no later than 1936, and he told me as much. . . .*"

"It was the autumn of 1933. The Duce had spoken to no one of the coming operations in East Africa; *only he and I knew what was going to happen*, and no indiscretion occurred by which the news could reach the public."

The foregoing extracts are from Chapter I, headed "The First Steps."

In 1933 Marshal de Bono had asked for and been promised command of the operations. In December 1934, just after the Wal Wal incident, the Duce advised him to leave for East Africa. He left on the 7th January, as it happened the day of the Rome agreement, and took office as High Commissioner for East Africa. On the 28th March he was appointed Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile, in the first half of February, General Graziani was appointed Commandant in Somaliland.

(p. 116.) "*On the 20th December, 1934, the Head of the Government personally compiled the Directions and Plan of Action for the solution of the Italo-Abyssinian question. This document, which was very secret, and issued only in five copies, is a model as regards its clear views, precise intentions, and logical instructions. It touches*

*Italics by Marshal de Bono.*

on all the more important points and leaves no doubts unresolved in the reader's mind: still less in the minds of those who had to put it into execution."

(p. 118.) On the 26th February the Duce writes a letter from which the Marshal gives extracts.

"The bulk of the indications and the messages intercepted allow us to suppose that the Negus does not wish to take the initiative of the encounter."

"In case the Negus should have no intention of attacking us, we ourselves must take the initiative."

The Marshal comments as follows:—

(p. 119.) "It is obvious from the extracts from letters and telegrams which I have transcribed that our programme was undergoing a radical alteration. From the plan of a manœuvred defensive followed by a counter-offensive, we were obliged to change over to the plan of an offensive action."

He then details the modification of plans necessitated by this change of policy.

(p. 161.) On the 18th May the Duce writes:

"There has even been talk of taking steps. . . . I have made it understood that we shall not turn back at any price. . . . In the meantime, with the nomination of the two arbitrators on the Italian side, we shall get the better of the next Council of the League of Nations, but in September we shall have to begin all over again. It may be that we shall then find it necessary to withdraw from Geneva.

"It is precisely in view of this eventuality that it is absolutely indispensable not to alter the date—October—which we have fixed for the beginning of the eventual operations."

(p. 190.) "On the evening of 21st August I received from the Head of the Government this concise telegram : 'Conference came to no conclusion ; Geneva will do the same. Make an end.'

"I replied : 'I have never believed in conferences or other such cackle : only results.' "

This narrative is endorsed by Signor Mussolini in an introduction from which the following is extracted :—

"This book was necessary, both for professional readers, who should derive enjoyment and draw an example from the great experiences of others, and for the people whose judgments are instinctive and often—for mysterious reasons—infallible.

"This book is interesting because it tells what happened yesterday, so that the protagonists and spectators can give reliable testimony. Above all, it is an impressive book, and destined, as such, to astonish the reader, whether he is an Italian or a foreigner."

## CHAPTER V

### EXPLANATIONS BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

No White Paper has been issued showing the proceedings of the British Government throughout the development of the dispute; and consequently nothing is known as to the instructions given to, and the views expressed by the British Ambassadors in Rome and Paris, and the British Minister in Addis Ababa. Explanation of the events recited can therefore only be sought in the speeches of members of the Government.

The following are relevant extracts from such speeches :

1. Mr. Baldwin at Bournemouth on the 4th October, 1935:

From the earliest days of the crisis there has been frequent and constant diplomatic touch maintained, and if that matter be challenged the Foreign Secretary will be ready at any time in the House of Commons to meet it in more detail.

2. The Foreign Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, soon afterwards fulfilled this promise and dealt at length with the matter in a speech in the House of Commons on the 22nd October, 1935. A quotation has already been given (page 29) from his reference to the Franco-Italian agreement of January 1935, and the Italian invitation to an exchange of views. The following is in continuation of that quotation :

It has been alleged in Italian circles that we took no notice of this invitation. The fact is that it was most seriously considered and that a special committee was set up to review the whole field of Anglo-Abyssinian



relations and British interests in that country, in order that we might decide upon our course of action. This investigation, which necessitated the taking of evidence of expert and experienced witnesses and the consultation of the Governments of the Sudan and Kenya, naturally and normally occupied some time; and if no specific reply has been returned to the Italian initiative it is because the rapid development of Italian activities in regard to Abyssinia precluded calm and considered discussion of these questions of detail. No instantaneous reply was possible and none was asked; indeed there could have been no occasion for special haste if no special Italian activities had been contemplated. His Majesty's Government could scarcely have embarked on a course of action which might have given the impression that they were preserving existing British interests in Abyssinia—which in any event are fully secured by Treaty—at the cost of endangering the security of that country. (*Hansard*.)

3. Lord Londonderry, in the House of Lords, on 22nd October, 1935:

An appeal had already been made on the part of Abyssinia to the League of Nations, but unhappily before this could be dealt with, the Italian Government began to take certain measures of a military character. (*The Times*.)

4. The Foreign Secretary, Mr. Anthony Eden, in the House of Commons on 6th May, 1936:

The hon. gentleman talked about Signor Mussolini's proposals to the Foreign Office in January, but Signor Mussolini made no proposals to the Foreign Office. He reported to us the outcome of his discussion with M. Laval, and he said he would like an exchange of views

with us about Abyssinia. The House knows—and there is nothing to be ashamed of in this—that there are certain rights which this country has in Abyssinia, in relation to Lake Tsana and other matters. When we received that information we set up an inter-departmental committee to investigate these matters. There was, of course, no shadow of suggestion at any time that in doing that there was anything improper and still less was there any suggestion that we were condoning an aggression. I cannot believe that the hon. gentleman really thinks that that is what we did in setting up the inter-departmental committee to meet a perfectly legitimate question of that kind. (*Hansard.*)

5. In the same speech, Mr. Eden, referring to the meeting of the Council in January 1935, said :

At that meeting of the Council it was the representative of His Majesty's Government who bore—it is hardly an exaggeration to say—the whole burden of negotiation. He strove hard to bring the matter within the ambit of the League, which the Italian Government resisted, and it was as the outcome of our efforts that letters were written that January by the representative of Italy, and the representative of Abyssinia, which resulted in the procedure of conciliation being set going.

## CHAPTER VI

### COMMENTS ON THESE EVENTS

REGARDING the attitude of the British Government in this matter there is a great paucity of written record, in striking contrast with the corresponding conditions on the outbreak of war in 1914, when all the diplomatic exchanges between London and the other capitals concerned were immediately published as a Blue Book.

The decisive phase of the dispute quite clearly took place in January 1935. At the beginning of the month the French Government must be adjudged to have given Italy a free hand in Abyssinia in return for certain considerations in Europe, North Africa, and the Mediterranean. We have already noted (p. 29) that the published details of the Rome agreement of the 7th January, 1935, represented a deal which on its own merits could not have been acceptable to Italy. The official announcements at that time were completely silent on the subject of Ethiopia, and M. Laval has denied (e.g., in a speech in the Chamber on the 28th December, 1935) that the agreement contained anything in the nature of French acquiescence in the Italian plans of aggression. Yet, as we now see, the British Government in their explanations have always treated the Rome agreement as a crucial point in the diplomatic history of the Italo-Ethiopian dispute. It is known that the discussions in Rome included one *tête-à-tête* meeting between the two statesmen, and it is impossible to escape the conviction that Signor Mussolini was left with the belief that there would be no French opposition to his plans.

In the middle of the month the League Council decided not to intervene in the dispute but to allow the matter to be dealt with outside by a three stage procedure which could not be otherwise than protracted. At the end of the month the British Government were approached by the Italian Government with what was evidently a tentative suggestion that they should enter into a deal similar to that just made with France. Neither then nor later did the British Government return an answer to this overture. They appointed an inter-departmental committee, thus announcing in effect that they raised no objection on principle, but that British interests required examination in detail. Their failure to reply certainly amounted to tacit acquiescence in whatever policy the Italian Government had disclosed to them.

The decision not to answer the Italian overture but to appoint this inter-departmental committee is not made any more intelligible by the curiously worded statements of the two successive Foreign Secretaries which have been quoted in chapter V, paragraphs 2 and 4. If solemn covenants possess any sanctity at all, how can it be held that "no instantaneous reply was possible"? How could an expression of disapproval have endangered the security of Ethiopia or conveyed the impression that we were concerned only with preserving our own interests? Did we convey an impression of disinterestedness by appointing a special committee to examine our own interests?

Mr. Eden denied that in omitting to reply there was any impropriety, still less "any suggestion that we were condoning an aggression," and claimed that the inter-departmental committee was set up "to meet a perfectly legitimate question." Surely the question put to us by Italy was, in view of the covenants to which we were both signatories,

one of the most illegitimate questions that could be put by one great Power to another; and our appointment of an inter-departmental committee to consider it one of the most improper actions in our history. As well might Sir Edward Grey have appointed an inter-departmental committee in July 1914 to consider the invasion of Belgium in relation to its possible effects on such matters as tourist traffic, and the North Sea fisheries.

Only trifling local interests could possibly exist in areas sparsely inhabited by nomadic pastoral peoples. The importance of Lake Tsana lay in its potential use as a reservoir, from which point of view it offered the cheapest site for storage in the Nile Valley. As one of the natural sources of the Nile its actual importance is small, the supply derived from it amounting in fact to about three per cent. of the total yearly flow of the river. It happens also that it contributes about this same proportion to the low season flow of the Nile. The Nile flood is derived almost entirely from the Blue Nile below Lake Tsana and from the Atbara; whilst the low stage supply of the Nile is derived for the most part from the White Nile. The contribution of Lake Tsana to either one or the other is relatively insignificant. A Lake Tsana reservoir would be a valuable utility to both Egypt and the Sudan, but it is definitely not a vital necessity to either.

Sir John Simon, Foreign Secretary at the time, made no statement on this matter. Neither did the Prime Minister, the late Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. A war was threatened between two States members of the League. One was *prima facie* the aggressor, and the other an appellant to the League. Clearly the whole basis of international order and the very elements of public honour were at stake, and not British local interests calling for examination in detail,

In any case these interests could have been stated in ten days or so by reference to records in London, supplemented, if necessary, by telegraphic inquiry. The setting up of this Committee, which reported on the 18th June, 1935, was a proceeding for which there could be no real justification.

A further development in this connexion was provided when on the 20th February, 1936, there was published in the *Giornale d'Italia*, the recognized mouthpiece of Signor Mussolini, what purported to be the gist of the report. This publication led to a statement by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, in the House of Commons on the 24th February, 1936, from which the following is an extract :

'Towards the end of January 1935, when the Abyssinian situation was already a cause of preoccupation to His Majesty's Government as a member of the Council of the League, an inquiry was made by the Italian Government as to the nature and extent of British interests in Abyssinia. An Inter-Departmental Committee was thereupon set up, under the Chairmanship of the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, for the purpose of estimating British interests in Abyssinia and of attempting an appreciation of the extent to which these interests might be affected by external events. . . . It was in no sense the task of this Committee to deal with His Majesty's Government's obligations under the Covenant or to attempt to frame a policy for His Majesty's Government in what had by that time come to be the possibility of serious trouble between Italy and Abyssinia. Had it been otherwise the Committee would have been differently constituted. It was merely concerned to establish facts.

The Committee's investigation naturally occupied

some time, and in the ultimate event no specific reply was returned to the Italian inquiry, owing to the fact that, by the time the examination was completed, the rapid development of Italian activities in regard to Abyssinia was beginning to raise the whole question of the integrity of Abyssinia, as to which any personal interests were naturally subordinated to our obligations as a member of the League.

The Committee reported to the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the 18th June last, and its report was to the effect that there was no important British interest in Abyssinia with the exception of Lake Tsana, the waters of the Blue Nile, and certain tribal grazing rights.

He went on to say that the Government's "policy has been inspired by no selfish or ulterior motive, but solely by consideration of the duties incumbent on His Majesty's Government as a member of the League of Nations and as whole-hearted supporters of the doctrine of collective security."

Mr. Eden thus admitted that by the end of January the British Government were aware that an act of aggression by Italy was possible. We now know from Marshal de Bono that Italy's course of action had been fully determined, and that the Commander of the invading armies had already taken over his duties; and we can well believe that Signor Mussolini had made his intentions quite clear to us. Nevertheless, Sir John Simon informed the House of Commons on the 15th February that the measures taken by Italy "in no way imply that it is the intention of the Italian Government to abandon their endeavours to seek an amicable settlement of their differences with Ethiopia." This statement was true in fact but misleading in effect; the

Italian Government were not abandoning endeavours which they were not making.

The immediate effect of our silence in January was to lead Signor Mussolini to think that we, as well as France, had acquiesced in his plans. He accordingly started his official mobilization early in February. Its later effect was to convince him that we had attempted to "double-cross" him, since our opposition to his plans only began when he was too deeply committed to withdraw.

Mr. Eden, in his account (p. 39) of the January meeting of the Council, claimed that the British representative strove to bring the matter within the ambit of the League. Obviously a formal appeal from a member had already brought the matter within the ambit of the League, and what really happened was that Italy strove hard to have it excluded and, with the acquiescence of the United Kingdom and France, succeeded in doing so. Indeed Mr. Eden in his speech of the 6th May, 1936, claimed credit for having got the extra-League procedure set in motion. In like manner Ethiopia was obliged at subsequent meetings of the Council to see her appeal time after time kept in abeyance pending the result of extra-League procedure, which at no stage showed any progress or prospect of success. We now know from Marshal de Bono's narrative that it was never meant to succeed, and the Italian attitude at the Council table must have made this clear all along.

It was not till the end of May that the Council can be said to have taken cognizance of the dispute, but even then the action taken was only to authorize the continuance of the dispute outside the League for another three months, with some intervention by the Council if no progress were shown after two months. Actually it was the 6th of September before the Council took the action which was enjoined on it



not only by its statutes, but by every consideration of justice to the appellant and of the most elementary common sense. The dispute had been brought officially to its notice by Ethiopia on the 14th December, 1934, and the formal appeal had been lodged on the 3rd January, 1935.

The Treaty of Amity, Conciliation and Friendship between Italy and Ethiopia was used by Italy solely as a means of preventing the League of Nations from taking action in the dispute. The actual course of events shows this clearly enough even without the frank admission contained in Marshal de Bono's narrative, *vide* the Duce's letter of 18th May, 1935 (p. 35). The Italian representative, Baron Aloisi, as late as the 31st July, 1935, was still speaking in these terms at the Council meeting :

Moreover the Italian Government desires to recall that, under the terms of the Covenant, the Council cannot proceed to an examination of the dispute, since the latter is at the moment submitted to arbitral procedure. The Council has always conformed to this rule. In view of existing precedents the Italian delegation has not even contemplated the possibility of a wider discussion, and could not therefore take part in any such discussion in the course of the present session.

The provisions of this treaty so far as they promised non-aggression and conciliation were entirely redundant as between members of the League and signatories to the Kellogg Pact. It must be inferred therefore in the light of these events that the treaty was from its very inception intended to frustrate the League and gain time for the preparation and transport of the invading armies. The only other feature of this treaty was the proposed construction of a road from Assab to Dessie. Had this been constructed it would have served well as the route for an invading

army, and it must now be inferred that this was one of its objects. Such conduct by one of the great Powers must be almost without parallel. In 1659 the Mahratta chieftain, Sivaji, invited an opposing general, Afzul Khan, to a friendly parley, and in a pretended embrace tore him asunder with a set of steel claws concealed in his hands. Just so was the Duce's use of a treaty of "constant peace and perpetual friendship."

In his introduction to Marshal de Bono's book, Signor Mussolini states that the failure of the 1928 treaty "was entirely the fault of Ethiopia." So far as the amity and conciliation clauses were concerned, the failure is seen to have been entirely on the side of Italy. As for the road, Italy's share was a relatively short length in the coastal plain, the cost of which would have been insignificant; whilst the Ethiopian share would have involved formidable engineering works and expenditure far beyond her resources. A survey was carried out on behalf of Ethiopia by a Dutch engineer, but by the time it was completed the slump had set in and even the wealthiest nations were forced to retrench. Moreover, Assab was then a port only in name, though it may well by now be a port in reality. Ethiopia cannot justly be blamed for any part of the failure of the 1928 treaty.

A large share in the responsibility for the failure of the League Council to do its obvious duty from the beginning must rest for all time on the French and British Governments, two of the dominant members of the Council. The British Government must bear undivided responsibility for their own negative attitude on the Italian overture of 29th January, 1935. These are events of extreme historical importance; and it may well be that in the not distant future they will be recognized as marking the end, not merely of

the League of Nations, but of the entire fabric of international order in Europe.

A similar attitude had been adopted by Sir John Simon towards the Japanese aggression against China in 1931-32. In January 1932 the American Government notified Japan that they would not countenance any action contrary to the independence and integrity of China, the "open door," and the Kellogg Pact. This was communicated to the British and French governments before despatch, and afterwards to the other signatories of the Nine Power Treaty. The American Government particularly desired our support in their protest. On the 11th January the British Government issued a Press communiqué to the effect that the Japanese Government had given assurances that the "open door" policy would be maintained, and therefore "His Majesty's Government have not considered it necessary to address any formal note to the Japanese Government, on the lines of the American Government's note."

Mr. Stimson, Secretary of State, who issued the American note, comments as follows, in his book, *The Far Eastern Crisis*.

The contents of this communiqué were such as to be taken by most readers, including—what was most important—the Japanese Government, as a rebuff to the United States. Its omissions were the most important feature. It was entirely silent as to the preservation of the sovereignty, independence and integrity of China, the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the assertion of the principle of non-recognition of the fruits of unlawful aggression. It thus ignored entirely the questions of world peace and China's integrity, which we had deemed the most important features not only of our note but of the previous three months' negotiations in which we had been supporting

the efforts of the League of Nations and the British Government. The communiqué dealt solely with the single problem of continuing trade relations with Manchuria.

The previous negotiations mentioned by Mr. Stimson were those in progress when Mr. Arthur Henderson was Foreign Secretary. The effect of Sir John Simon's pronouncement cannot have been confined to the Far East. It was made on the eve of the assembly of the Disarmament Conference, originating in the Treaty of Versailles, and for which diplomatic and other preparation had been continuously in progress ever since 1919. Years of diplomatic endeavour<sup>1</sup> had been devoted to building up a sense of security, in which reliance on the sanctity of treaties would take the place of reliance on armaments, thus enabling an important feature of the Treaty of Versailles to be implemented. If Sir John Simon's action was expedient in the Far East—and this may be doubted—it was surely most inopportune in Europe.

It is instructive but disquieting to compare this attitude with that of British statesmen in the past. The following are extracts from Sir Edward Grey's speech in the House of Commons on 3rd August, 1914, as reported in *The Times*.

We have always done it (worked for peace) and in these last years, as far as His Majesty's Government are concerned we should have no difficulty in proving that we have done it.

I would like the House to approach the crisis in which we are from the point of view of British interests, British honour (loud Opposition cheers), British obligations (renewed cheers) and free from all passion. We were sounded once, in the course of last week as to whether, if a guarantee were given that after the war Belgian

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Chap. IX, *infra*.

integrity would be preserved, that would content us. We replied that we could not bargain away whatever interests or obligations we had in Belgian neutrality.

He quoted Mr. Gladstone as follows (*Hansard*, Vol. 203, August 1870):

We have an interest in the independence of Belgium which is wider than that which we may have in the literal operation of the guarantee. It is found in the answer to the question whether, under the circumstances of the case, this country, endowed as it is with influence and power, would quietly stand by and witness the preparation of the direst crime that ever stained the pages of history, and thus become participators in the sin.

Sir E. Grey continued :

If in a crisis like this we ran away (loud cheers) from those obligations of honour and interest as regards the Belgian Treaty, I doubt whether whatever material force we might have at the end it would be of very much value in face of the respect which we should have lost. . . .

At the end of this war . . . I do not believe for a moment—even if we had stood aside and remained aside—that we should be in a position, a material position, to use our force decisively to undo what had happened in the course of the war . . . and I am quite sure that our moral position would be such—(the rest of the sentence was lost in a loud outburst of cheering).

If we were to say that all those things mattered nothing, were as nothing, and to say that we would stand aside, we should, I believe, sacrifice our respect and good name and reputation before the world and should not escape the most serious and grave economic consequences.

Mr. Bonar Law :

I give them now the assurance on behalf of the party

of which I am leader in this House, that in whatever steps they think it necessary to take for the honour and security of this country they can rely upon the unhesitating support of the Opposition.

Throughout the Far Eastern as well as the Abyssinian crisis, neither the actions of the British Government, nor the utterances of individual members of the Cabinet, have shown any regard for British honour or British obligations; though since 1914 these obligations have been greatly expanded by our signature of the Covenant of the League, the Kellogg Pact and the Nine Power Treaty. It seems that in these recent years nothing but a short-range view of British material interests has entered into the determination of foreign policy. This attitude was as short-sighted as it was cynical. We are now faced with Italian occupation of an impregnable natural fortress, commanding both the route to India and the Nile Valley, whilst at the same time the Government has treated as of no account those very motives which carried this country into war in 1914, and for which Mr. Gladstone was prepared to go to war in 1870 if either France or Germany had invaded Belgium. It is a fashion in Press writings and in general talk to speak of honour and obligations and international ethics as if they were elements in some new-fangled and unpractical idealism. They are nothing of the kind. Together with a proper regard for material interests, they have been amongst the guiding principles of foreign policy for at least a century. The novelty lies in their being entirely ignored by a British government. The effect of this cynicism is bound to be felt in any future war into which we may be drawn. It can perhaps be discerned already in the reluctance of men to join the fighting services. The Government have disqualified themselves from speaking in the terms used by

Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Gladstone; and those who are called on to make recruiting speeches find themselves bereft of many of the formerly valid reasons why men should go to war.

*The Times* of October 15th, 1936, contained reports of speeches on defence by Mr. Duff Cooper, Sir Thomas Inskip and Mr. Winston Churchill. Their appeals to the manhood of the country were as follows:

Mr. Duff Cooper:

. . . it was difficult to persuade young men in these days of increasing employment to give up years of their lives to serve in the Army, but it has got to be done.

. . . He was convinced that they had only to tell the young men of England that their services were wanted, and that if they did this they would enjoy a good life and good prospects, in order to persuade them to join either the Territorials or the Regular Army.

Sir Thomas Inskip:

He made no appeal in the ordinary sense. He simply stated the facts, and the manhood of Great Britain could remove one anxiety from the mind of the Government by a widespread recognition of its public duty to come forward and man these two anti-aircraft divisions.

Mr. Winston Churchill:

When we saw all those motor-bicycles and motor-cars, thousands more of them every month, it seemed astonishing that we could not induce the young men who rode and drove them to take their part in an efficient volunteer organization.

The manhood of the country is likely to be quite unmoved by this type of exhortation, and it is the Government's own attitude in the Far East and in Ethiopia which precludes

them and other leaders like Mr. Churchill from making any more inspiring appeal.

The same page of *The Times* reported also a speech by Mr. Eden on foreign affairs. He claimed that "the main objectives of our foreign policy are the elimination of war and the promotion of international understanding." Yet the fact is that when Japan perpetrated an infraction of the League Covenant, the Kellogg Pact and the Nine Power Treaty, Great Britain was the first to condone it; and when Italy threatened an attack on Ethiopia in breach of the Tripartite Treaty of 1906, the League Covenant, the Kellogg Pact and the 1928 Treaty of Amity, this country was the second to become accessory before the fact, France being the first.

Mr. Eden concluded :

On behalf of His Majesty's Government I give you the assurance that without prejudice or passion we shall work to our utmost to ensure that in the world to-day counsels of reason shall prevail.

Surely in international relationships "counsels of reason" must include some standards of rectitude. In the four speeches alluded to above there was no hint that this country should be right as well as strong. Even from the point of the recruiting officer and the commander in the field there must be a cause worth fighting for. Were not the English men-at-arms in olden days inspired by the battle-cry "For God, England and the Right" ?

In a memorandum (1.1.07, British Documents on the Origins of the War, Vol. III) Mr. Eyrie Crowe, later Under-Secretary of State, showed why England's basic policy always had been, and must be, "so directed as to harmonize with the general desires and ideals common to all mankind." And this is still true to-day.



## CHAPTER VII

### FURTHER COMMENTS

WHEN the League of Nations was founded it was quite properly intended that its affairs should be largely in the hands of the Council, and that this Council should be dominated by the great Powers. At the period under review the dominant Powers were France, Italy and the United Kingdom, and it was by their actions and on their responsibility that the Council refrained until September 1935 from even enquiring into a dispute which had been reported to it in the previous December. We have seen that just before the Council meeting of January 1935 a treaty, undoubtedly bearing on the matter in dispute, had been made between two of these Powers, and that the commander of the armies of invasion had already left for the prospective theatre of war. We have also seen that just before the Council meeting of May 1935 the Head of the Italian State had announced to his military commander his intention of getting the better of the League by using the provisions of a solemn treaty of peace and amity, conciliation and arbitration, which he had induced his intended victim to sign only a few years previously.

On the 11th September Sir S. Hoare made a very striking speech at the League Assembly, one of the most impressive passages being that "The League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression." This

speech created a great impression at home and abroad, being universally taken to mean that at last a genuine stand was to be made against a strikingly obvious act of aggression. It is hardly too much to say that this speech appeared at the time to be more important than any uttered by a British statesman since 1914. But in fact on the day before this speech Sir Samuel Hoare had been in conversation with M. Laval, representing France, and they were in complete agreement that no serious steps must be taken in restraint of the aggressor (M. Laval in the Chamber of Deputies on 28th December, 1935, *vide Italy against the World*, G. Martelli, p. 150).

Neither the League as a corporation, nor the general body of its member states, can be blamed for any failure in the face of such actions by the Powers who took it upon themselves to dominate its proceedings.

The objects of the League are set forth in the preamble to the Covenant as follows :

The High Contracting Parties,

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security—

by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war,  
by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations,

by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments,

and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all Treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another,  
agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

Are these all impossibly exacting and idealistic standards of international ethics? Surely they are little more than the

minimum conditions upon which a number of nations, divided by race, language, and historical antecedents, and now armed with weapons of a destructive power unknown in any previous age, can live together on the limited surface of a single planet. Yet every one of them was flagrantly violated in the course of events under review. Corresponding codes regulate the conduct of professional and business men throughout the world, and are enforced with particular rigour in the field of sport and recreation. Are we Europeans to admit that our highest code of ethics is to be found at the card table, and our lowest in international affairs? Was Mr. Gandhi right when he described our civilization as satanic?

The view seems to be widely held in this country that the League of Nations represents some fanciful conception, born in the doctrinaire brain of President Wilson, planted on a sceptical Europe, and afterwards repudiated by the country of its birth. This view does not accord with the facts. As early as December 1914 Sir Edward Grey wrote in the following terms to the British Ambassador at Washington:

I can only give you my personal view which is that there are two main objects to be secured:

(1) Evacuation of Belgium. . . .

(2) . . .

An agreement between the great Powers at the end of this war with the object of mutual security and preservation of peace in future might have stability if the United States would become a party to it and were prepared to join in repressing by force whoever broke the Treaty.

President Wilson and ex-President Taft were active promoters of the League, but Sir Edward Grey, who had

been British Foreign Secretary during eleven critical years, was whole-heartedly co-operating with them, *vide* the following message sent by him to Mr. Taft through the British Embassy on 23rd November, 1916:

I think public utterances must have already made it clear that I sincerely desire to see a League of Nations formed and made effective to secure the future peace of the world after this war is over. I regard this as the best if not the only prospect of preserving Treaties and saving the world from aggressive wars in years to come, and if there is any doubt about my sentiments in the matter I hope this telegram in reply to your own will remove it. (*Grey of Fallodon*, G. M. Trevelyan, p. 314.)

Other British statesmen who played a part in founding the League were Lord Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil. Sir Cecil Hurst, Chief Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, took a leading part in drafting the Covenant; and Sir Eric Drummond was Secretary-General to the League during the first fourteen years of its existence. Lord Lugard played an important part on the Permanent Mandates Commission almost from the beginning, and Lord Hailey is now its President. Lord Lytton presided over the League Commission on Manchuria, and Mr. Arthur Henderson over the Disarmament Conference. Of all its members this country had the least reason to regard the League as an institution of exotic origin and suspect tendencies.

It is a not unusual practice of Ministers when speaking on foreign affairs to refer to the United States' abstention from membership as one of the handicaps imposed on the League. It is of course true that the presence of an American member on the Council would have precluded the gross dereliction of 1935, when two of the three domin-

ant Powers connived at inaction by the Council, whilst the third assembled the means of aggression against a minor and defenceless member of the League. It is true that the United States did refuse to sign the Covenant, but she is the only one of the great Powers who has consistently observed its principles. She initiated the Kellogg-Briand pact renouncing war as an instrument of policy, and was a signatory to the Nine Power Treaty designed to preserve the integrity and independence of China. It was she who protested against the Japanese invasion of China in 1931-32, and we who published an official declaration of unconcern. It was she who refused any share in the spoils of victory after the last war, and we who took the largest share. Any imputation of delinquency to the United States is quite contrary to the facts, and in all the circumstances such insinuations come with particularly bad grace from spokesmen of the British Government.

It is sometimes said by Ministers when taxed in Parliament with dilatory and ineffectual handling of foreign affairs, that the democratic constitution of this country prevents the Government from acting in advance of public opinion. Our constitution is based on precedent, but it is doubtful whether those who use this argument—Mr. Baldwin was a notable example—could quote valid precedents for an inhibition which would make the public and not the Government responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs. In 1870 the neutrality of Belgium was preserved as the result of a treaty made by Mr. Gladstone with France and Prussia, wherein it was agreed that any violation of Belgium would mean our intervention in arms. The signing of this treaty was communicated to Parliament after the event in the speech quoted by Sir E. Grey on 3rd August, 1914. The theory that the Government's

actions must lag behind manifestations of public opinion seems to be both novel and disastrous.

On the 23rd October, 1935, Mr. Baldwin, announcing in Parliament that he had decided to hold a general election, made the following reference to democracy:—

One of the weaknesses of a democracy, a system of which I am trying to make the best, is that until it is right up against it, it will never face the truth. When a democracy is up against the truth it can form its own judgment, and I have never known the British democracy when it is up against the truth to give a wrong judgment. This election was sprung on the country and won very largely on the strength of the firm stand against aggression which Sir Samuel Hoare had proclaimed at the League Assembly in September. Public opinion in this country showed no weakness on the issues of right and wrong as between Italy and Ethiopia. Nor was it undecided in its desire to uphold the Covenant of the League, as its attitude to the Hoare-Laval proposals of December 1935 clearly showed. It was, in fact, this very decisiveness which enabled Mr. Baldwin to win a snap election on a policy of which the Government's actions, both before and after, were a complete negation. The democracy was grossly deceived, and the taunt of weakness and refusal to face the truth came strangely from Mr. Baldwin at that particular moment.

If there is anything wrong with the democratic system in this country, it seems to be in Parliament rather than outside, and it is due in large measure to the formation of a National Government in 1931 having greatly weakened the Opposition. It is also a serious disadvantage that foreign affairs have now an importance far transcending all questions of internal administration. The Opposition would be

failing in their duty did they not criticize the Government for their handling of these matters, and yet their having to do so continually is a not very desirable feature of parliamentary procedure to-day. If a Government which claims to be a National and not a Party Government would be more frank in its statements on foreign affairs, it would surely be acting in accordance with the wishes of those who put it in power, besides obviating a series of rather unseemly and usually barren debates.

Another explanation sometimes offered for the attitude of the British Government towards the Japanese aggression in 1931-32, and the Italian aggression in 1935, is the degree to which this country had disarmed itself. It is difficult to see how disarmament, however drastic, could justify the communiqué of January 1932 (p. 48) amounting almost to a blessing on the aggression, or the failure to return any remonstrance to the Italian notification in January 1935 of their intended attack on Ethiopia. In the case of Japan the attack was so sudden that it could not have been forestalled by any protest; and only very severe economic or other pressure would have forced her to relinquish the prey that she had already seized. Nevertheless, we could and should have joined the United States—and others would certainly have followed our lead—in her protest, thus doing some honour to our obligations and vindicating the principles of international order, instead of setting both at naught in an official communiqué.

The circumstances of the Italian aggression were quite different. Whatever may be thought of Signor Mussolini's treatment of Ethiopia, his conduct towards this country and France was perfectly straightforward. Under the Tripartite Treaty of 1906 it was his duty to consult the other two Powers before taking isolated action. He did so before

finally committing himself to the enterprise, and some nine months before his attack could possibly begin. It was not necessary to be heavily armed to have remonstrated on the ground that the execution of his plans must inevitably undermine the foundations of international order, the maintenance of which was definitely a British interest, and that it was therefore impossible that we should approve his proposed course of action.

The purpose of M. Laval's visit to Rome in January 1935 cannot have been unknown to the British Government before he started. It is not to be believed that the likelihood of an Italian attack on Ethiopia which, as already recorded in these pages (p. 31) was in September 1934 the subject of an official denial in Rome, and of "front page news" and leading articles in the American Press, was unheard of in Downing Street until January 1935. There was ample time for the British and French Governments to agree to address counsels of restraint to Italy, a recent ally of both, an enemy of neither, and up till then a faithful, if not enthusiastic, member of the League of Nations. They did not do so, and cannot evade their joint responsibility for this failure, nor can we evade our share of this responsibility on the ground that we had inadequate fighting forces.

And was this country so very much disarmed? Our navy was costing much more in 1935 than in 1913,<sup>1</sup> and it preponderated in apparent strength over any other navy in Europe far more than at that time. If it was unready for use owing to lack of some essential equipment or supplies, surely there should have been an inquiry into the matter. The Government may have had a mandate for a reduced

<sup>1</sup> Navy Estimates 1913-14, £42,022,000, 1934-35, £56,550,000 — *Whitaker's Almanack*



navy, but they had no mandate for maintaining a dummy at great cost to the taxpayer. It is implied sometimes by official spokesmen that the Socialists are to blame for our lack of arms and ammunition, but this argument breaks down merely on the time factor. The Socialists have not been in power except for eight months in 1924, and for just over two years in 1929 to 1931. They cannot be held responsible for disarmament, and still less for unreadiness in 1935. The fact is that the responsibility for disarmament is fairly well distributed between several Governments and the public as a whole, and it was not unwelcome either to taxpayers or to beneficiaries under the social services. We knowingly economized on the fighting services because we wanted to spend money in other directions, and we should not make too much of the claim that this was intended to be a noble example in disarmament. Unreadiness is an entirely different matter, as the public can know nothing about it. In so far as naval unreadiness was a factor in foreign affairs the Government must be held wholly responsible.

The British Government's failure to protest in January 1935 must have been due to some reason other than lack of fighting strength. They must have thought, as the French Government evidently did too, that if they offended Italy she might join up with Germany and threaten the peace of Europe. There was of course no guarantee that she would not do so in any case. Nevertheless this is the explanation which most nearly fits the known facts. Ethiopia was to pay the price of peace in Europe. Even if it had been successful, this would have been one of the most cynical acts in the history of Europe's relations with primitive peoples. It turned out to be not only an act of complete cynicism, but an astounding error of judgment as well.

Too late it was remembered by both that the League of Nations was an important element in the peace of Europe, and it was seen that its authority and even its very existence were being gravely endangered. Too late also the Governments must have realized that British and French imperial strategy might be compromised. The situation created by the initial error could not then be retrieved. Mobilization was proceeding rapidly in Italy and war fever was being actively engendered. Abandonment of the Italian plan was out of the question. The bargain had been made, payment was demanded in full, and the successively increasing offers of June, August and December were rejected with scorn.

The opposition finally offered to his plans had no other effect than to harden the resolution of Signor Mussolini, and more especially to consolidate Italian public opinion behind him. Sanctions were applied to a strictly limited category of commodities, from which anything in the shape of war materials was purposely excluded. The economic pressure exerted by this measure was intended to operate slowly, and it served no other purpose than to prompt the Duce to adopt the most ruthless methods to bring the war to an early end. In the upshot the Ethiopian blood which was to have cemented the Stresa Front was shed in vain. Ethiopia was conquered, the League's position seriously impaired, the Governments of the United Kingdom and France shown up in a transaction both infamous and stupid, and Italy raised to a high pitch of martial exaltation, with a whetted appetite for further adventure, and a complete contempt for any form of international order. The Stresa Front of 1935 gave place to the Rome-Berlin "Axis" of 1936, and now to the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo "Triangle" of 1937 with vague but menacing objectives.

All this would have been avoided if the Government of France and the United Kingdom had from the beginning exerted themselves to dissuade Italy from her intended attack, and at the same time had allowed the League Council to perform the duty of investigation and conciliation laid upon it by the terms of the Covenant. In other words, they had only to take the course which was simple and straightforward, instead of that which was complicated and devious.

If they felt quite convinced that to oppose Italy would imperil the peace of Europe, which they were not prepared to do, they should at least have so informed the Emperor at the outset and left him to do the best he could for his country, either by fighting or by negotiation or by the one followed by the other. It was only the Emperor's reliance on the League and his ability to restrain his chieftains and people that gave the Italians time to prepare a successful invasion. Had these preparations been forestalled by an Ethiopian attack it is probable that an honourable settlement could have been negotiated, as the result of initial Ethiopian success. (The inaction of the League Council, for which France and Britain must be held responsible, quite definitely amounted to a betrayal of an unoffending and defenceless people, and of a courageous and honourable man, and as such must stain the pages of European history for centuries to come.)

Some might argue that the end justifies the means, and that the sacrifice of Ethiopia was a small matter in comparison with the peace of Europe. Even if this rather dubious premise be accepted, the British and French statesmen concerned surely stand convicted of a grave error of judgment in having acquiesced in the Italian plan. (It is difficult to think of an incident which has done more far-reaching

ham to international order than the Italian attack on Ethiopia, to which, in January 1935, both France and Britain became accessories before the fact. —

During the first three days of February 1935 conversations were held in London, as a result of which the following joint declaration was issued on the 3rd February by the British and French Governments:—

The object of the meeting between the British and French Ministers, which has been taking place in London, was to promote the peace of the world by closer European co-operation, in a spirit of most friendly confidence, and to remove those tendencies which, if unchecked, are calculated to lead to a race in armaments and to increase the dangers of war.

With this object in view the British and French Ministers proceeded to an examination of the general situation. They took note of the particularly important part played by the League of Nations in the recent settlements of certain international problems, and welcomed the successful results as evidence of the conciliatory spirit of all the Governments taking part in those settlements. They declare their determination to pursue, both as regards the problems of their own countries and of the League, policies guided by the same methods of conciliation and co-operation.

With reference to the Franco-Italian agreements recently reached in Rome, the British Ministers, on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, cordially welcomed the declaration by which the French and Italian Governments have asserted their intention to develop the traditional friendship which unites the two nations, and associated His Majesty's Government with the intention of the French and Italian

Governments to collaborate in a spirit of mutual trust<sup>ff</sup> in the maintenance of general peace.

(Cmd. 5143. No. 5.)

Read in the light of the interchanges of the previous month, and of the fact that Italian mobilization began immediately afterwards, what does this statement mean if not that the two Powers had agreed to sacrifice Ethiopia to placate the third? To say that this was being done in the interests of European peace would be to beg the whole question of a general European settlement, and to assume that a line-up against Germany was the right way to approach this problem. It is not within the scope of this present study to examine the question of Germany, except in so far as Ethiopia was concerned. It cannot be doubted that there was a very close connection here. Ethiopia was evidently sacrificed in the belief firstly that this would ensure that Italy would line up with France and Britain *vis-à-vis* Germany; and secondly that such an alignment would make for peace in Europe. Here were two separate speculations, and the odds against the double event were naturally the product of the separate odds.

No consideration seems to have been given to the adverse chances. Damage to the League was a certainty; and even if there had been no League, the callous and cynical disregard of the Treaty of 1928, initiated by Signor Mussolini himself, would have been a blow to the honour and probity of mankind, and thus to international order. That Ethiopia was a potentially valuable economic asset was one gamble; and that even if it were valuable it would satisfy its possessor was another. (It was no more than another gamble to assume that even the most favourable outcome of the Ethiopian venture would have made Italy link her fortunes permanently with France and the United Kingdom.

Finally it was far from certain that the formation of this three-Power bloc in restraint of Germany would contribute towards a permanent settlement in Europe. It was a certainty that it would be regarded by Germany as a hostile move, and it could only be a matter of guess-work whether this would have a restraining or a provocative effect. (A month later the open revolt of Germany began : the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles were repudiated, and conscription was introduced.)

This is a brief statement of the considerations which quite obviously must have presented themselves for appraisal before the French and British statesmen in January 1935. Endeavouring to balance these values, and ignoring all considerations of ethics, it is difficult to see what course of reasoning could have led these statesmen to the conclusion that the cause of peace in Europe would be advanced by their acquiescence in an Italian attack on Ethiopia, a sovereign state Member of the League whose most notable characteristic was detachment from the outside world.

Returning to the ethical standpoint, the ancient *cliché* that "The end justifies the means" has already been quoted. It seems that the events narrated are based upon an enlargement of this thesis, and that we are now called upon to accept the principle that "the means are justifiable if they offer any chance of leading to a justifiable end." (The invasion of Ethiopia by Italy was licensed not to ensure the peace of Europe, but on the chance that it might help to do so. The outcome of this abominable gamble was a complete fiasco. The zero turned up, all the stakes have been raked in, and the gamblers have forfeited the respect and confidence of the onlookers. Amongst those who followed these events with understanding, and who value the credit of European civilization, many must feel personal shame for what has

passed beyond recall, and apprehension for what may be yet to come, if such methods are not entirely abandoned. It can only be hoped, changing the metaphor from the roulette board to the physical sciences, that this represents the absolute zero, and that European statecraft will fall no lower.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

IN subjecting these events to a critical examination the purpose has been not to condemn the men in control, but to present an account of the facts, and to examine their implications, with a degree of accuracy in detail which would discover the nature and dimensions of any errors, and thus perhaps show how these errors might be corrected. What seems to emerge from this examination is that the first error was that of January 1932 in condoning the Japanese aggression (*vide* p. 48), and that a second and still greater error was made in January 1935, when we acquiesced in the Franco-Italian deal regarding Ethiopia. The first would have been serious enough, but it could have been corrected to some extent, or its harmful effects on world order greatly reduced, if it had not been followed by the second. It is the cumulative effect of the two which is now so difficult to arrest: yet arrested it must be if civilization is to continue. Features which are common to both are disregard not only of solemn engagements, but also of simple standards of rectitude; and failure to foresee the consequences of such neglect. The feature which is peculiar to the second error is the tripartite agreement—it is quite immaterial that this was partly tacit—to sacrifice the independence of Ethiopia and the lives of many of its inhabitants, in the belief that the cause of European peace would be thereby promoted.

The complete failure of this compact to promote peace in Europe, indeed the obvious fact that it did immense



damage, is surely a striking example of material harm resulting from unethical conduct, and a conspicuous warning against similar acts in future. The whole course of events here described cries aloud against the abandonment of all ethical standards in international affairs, and points unmistakably to the need for resuming such standards if international confusion is not to be far worse confounded.

At the time of writing (November 1937) it is being hinted that Germany's claim to the return of her colonies may be traded against a free hand in Eastern or Central Europe. Free hand is of course a euphemism for acquiescence in a ruthless war, in which women and children will be used as bomb-fodder. It might have been thought that the standards of humane conduct, of international propriety, and of responsible statesmanship had been more than sufficiently lowered in the Ethiopian incident. But the latest suggestion would surely still further debase the civilization of Europe, and disgrace those who are in a position to direct events. We have seen lives sacrificed in Africa in the belief that the alternative was bloodshed on a vastly greater scale in Europe. Are we now to license slaughter in Europe not to save lives elsewhere, but merely to save such pride as comes to us from the possession of territories acquired in war, or rather, to be quite accurate, from the right to administer these territories? It is not within the scope of this present study to discuss the problem of Germany's former colonies, or to do more than point out here that any such action would be even more immoral than the sacrifice of Ethiopia, and that it is as certain as anything can be that it would be ultimately as disastrous.

We shall not escape from the troubles and dangers surrounding us by a policy of day-to-day opportunism, evading solution of a problem by the adoption of some

expedient that lies ready to hand, regardless of its ethical content or its final implications. The first essential is a return to those "open, just and honourable relations between the nations" which figure in the preamble to the Covenant. And where lies the difficulty in applying principles that everyone understands and that are accepted in all other human relationships? Without the tradition and practice of just and honourable dealings the business world would come to a standstill, social relationships would break down, and sport and recreation would be impossible.

Surely it is only practical common sense, and not just impracticable idealism, to suggest that the statesman should accord some observance to a distinction between right and wrong. Not necessarily in the sense in which this distinction might be drawn in the pulpit; but rather in the sense in which it would be used, for example, on the navigating bridge of a ship, in the designing office of an engineer, or in the laboratory of the chemist or physicist. The statesman may protest, and with justice, that he is not dealing with exact sciences. The more reason, therefore, for him to be exact when he can. The navigator avoids seriously losing his course when weather conditions prevent him from getting his exact position, just because he holds the correct course whenever he has definite data to work on. When he finds himself off this course he returns to it at once, by the use of his knowledge of the difference between right and wrong, and his habit of applying this knowledge. Thus he cannot go very far wrong.

The statesman is often presented with problems where the distinction between the right and the wrong cannot be exactly determined. Should a certain frontier be based on strategic, economic, or ethnographic considerations; or on what compromise between them? What attitude should

be adopted towards the rival participants in a civil war? And other similar problems. In such cases decision must be a matter of individual judgment, and therefore to some extent guess-work; at the best an impartial guess, at the worst a guess influenced by some element of personal prejudice. Neither universally recognized principles, nor specific treaty obligations are involved. An error of judgment in such circumstances is understandable, and may perhaps be pardonable. But it must be recognized that the statesman is being thus accorded a tolerance of error which is denied to men in most other walks of life: the professional navigator, for example, is held strictly to account for any mistakes he may make.

But the statesman is not always in this predicament. In the case of the Japanese aggression against China in 1931, and of the Italian aggression against Ethiopia in 1935, there was nothing complicated or abstruse. The facts were clear; the infraction of solemn obligations, and the threat to international order were strikingly conspicuous; the distinction between right and wrong was quite obvious. The right thing to do was to protest, and to endeavour to persuade the aggressor to abandon his designs; the wrong thing was to convey to him a sense of our indifference, hardly distinguishable from approval of his aggression. Yet in both cases it was the latter course which was adopted by Sir John Simon, the statesman who was then responsible for foreign policy. By guesswork it was judged expedient to adopt a policy which was patently wrong by almost any standard of conduct. These wrongful decisions, in cases where the issues were clear-cut and straightforward, have made it much more difficult now to solve the complicated problems confronting us. The ship was steered by guesswork in clear weather, and it has become very difficult to get back on

to the right course, now that fog has descended, and uncharted rocks are ahead.

Unethical conduct in international relations may perhaps have served in the past where the worst result of a war was the death and injury of men on a relatively small scale and the transfer of territory and people from one flag to another. In these days war is far different, with its huge armies and terribly destructive implements designed for use indiscriminately against entire populations and the whole material fabric of modern life. It seems that we are employing a technique of statecraft which is centuries old and a perilous anachronism when united to the war equipment of to-day.

A book recently published (*What Next O Duce?* Beatrice Baskerville), opens with a quotation from Machiavelli and the statement that "The Florentine historian has many disciples in Italy nowadays, and Mussolini is one of them." The author states (p. 198) that Mussolini has publicly commended Machiavelli's "Prince" to the attention of Fascist diplomatists. Signor Mussolini has taken the lead in Europe in the last two or three years, and there are important national leaders elsewhere who take him for their model. It may therefore be interesting to examine the credentials of Machiavelli, who died more than four hundred years ago. The following is from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th Edition :

Machiavelli conceived the strongest admiration for Cesare Borgia's combination of audacity with diplomatic prudence, for his adroit use of cruelty and fraud, for his self-reliance, avoidance of half measures, employment of native troops, and firm administration of conquered provinces. More than once in letters to his friend Vettori, no less than in the pages of the *Principe* (Prince), Machiavelli afterwards expressed his belief that Cesare

Borgia's behaviour in the conquest of provinces, the cementing of a new state out of scattered elements, and the dealing with false friends or doubtful allies, was worthy of all praise and of scrupulous imitation. As he watched Cesare Borgia at this, the most brilliant period of his adventurous career, the man became idealized to his reflective but imaginative mind. Round him, as a hero, he allowed his own conceptions of the perfect prince to cluster. That Machiavelli separated the actual Cesare Borgia, whom he afterwards saw, ruined and contemptible, at Rome, from this radiant creature of his political fancy, is probable. That the Cesare Borgia of history does not exactly match the Duca Valentino of Machiavelli's writings is certain. Still the fact remains that henceforth Machiavelli cherished the ideal image of the statesman which he had modelled upon Cesare, and called this by the name of Valentino.

In 1506 Machiavelli was concerned to organize a Florentine Militia, and the selection of a Commander-in-Chief presented a problem.

The choice of Soderini and Machiavelli fell, at this juncture, upon an extremely ineligible person, none other than Don Micheletto, Cesare Borgia's cut-throat and assassin. It is necessary to insist upon this point, since it serves to illustrate a radical infirmity in Machiavelli's genius. While forming and promoting his scheme, he was actuated by principles of political wisdom and by the purest patriotism. But he failed to perceive that such a ruffian as Micheletto could not inspire the troops of Florence with that devotion to their country and that healthy moral tone which should distinguish a patriot army. Here, as elsewhere, he revealed his insensibility to the ethical element in human nature,

His military organization failed and Florence surrendered to the Medici. After a vain attempt to serve the new masters of Florence he was imprisoned and racked, but eventually released. After that, alternating between spells of debauchery and genuine scholarly research he compiled the books which have made him famous.

If the modern Roman diplomat is being urged to model himself on Cesare Borgia, we may do well to scrutinize the latter's qualifications to be the original source of European statecraft as seemingly practised to-day. The following is again from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* :—

Cesare Borgia, Duke of Valentinois and Romagna (1476–1507). Son of Pope Alexander VI by his mistress Vanozza dei Cattanei.

Cesare Borgia was a type of the adventurers with which the Italy of the Renaissance swarmed, but he was cleverer and more unscrupulous than his rivals. His methods of conquest were ferocious and treacherous, but once the conquest was made he governed his subjects with firmness and justice, so that his rule was preferred to the anarchy of factions and local despots. But he was certainly not a man of genius, as has long been imagined, and his success was chiefly due to the support of the papacy; once his father was dead his career was at an end, and he could no longer play a prominent part in Italian affairs. His fall proved on how unsound a basis his system had been built up.

Both these men were in fact failures as practical politicians, one ending his career at forty-three and the other, despite his cleverness and ruthlessness, at twenty-seven. Machiavelli's fame is based on the theories of statecraft which he embodied in his writings when active participation in events was denied to him. Here he appears to the

writer of the article in the *Encyclopædia* in a much more favourable light as an analytically-minded innovator :

He was aware that the old strongholds of medieval thought must be abandoned, and that the decaying ruins of medieval institutions furnished no basis for the erection of solid political edifices. . . . He founded the science of politics for the modern world, by concentrating thought upon its fundamental principles. . . .

. . . He formed a conception of the modern state, which marked the close of the middle ages, and anticipated the next phase of European development. . . .

From the foregoing criticism it will be perceived that all the questions, whether Machiavelli meant to corrupt or to instruct the world, to fortify the hands of tyrants or to lead them to their ruin, are now obsolete. He was a man of science—one who by the vigorous study of his subject sought from that subject matter itself to deduce laws.

The man of whom this could be written, if he were alive to-day, would surely realize that the circumstances of the time call for some new conception of statecraft, and would not exhort his agents to go back four hundred years to learn their technique from the inter-state relations of petty principalities. It may well be that he would conclude that modern war is incompatible with modern civilization, and that one must exclude the other. In short, if the historian who has been quoted is accurate in his judgment, Machiavelli might well have been one of the originators of the League of Nations and of the Kellogg Pact. If anything is to be copied from Machiavelli it is his objective method of approach to the political problems of his time, and not the detailed conclusions which he drew from the conditions of his own bygone age.

Wars in the past did not threaten civilization, but only affected the safety, comfort and pride of individuals and nations. Now it cannot be doubted that civilization itself is at stake. This fact began to reveal itself in the war of 1914-1918, and it became more and more obvious as the war progressed and grew increasingly destructive. It was in recognition of this new development that the League was promoted, not to satisfy some strain of idealism in the temperaments of its founders, but as a purely practical measure for averting other and more deadly wars in the future. Since then civilization has become increasingly dependent upon mechanical installations and therefore increasingly vulnerable to physical damage; whilst concurrently the engines of war have become increasingly destructive. Thus the need for machinery such as the League is far greater to-day than it was twenty years ago. Yet it is this organization which has been deliberately sabotaged by a certain defiant and malcontent member who gambled, unfortunately with success, on the probability that the lukewarm support of some others would make the League impotent.

It is strange but true that this blow should have come from Rome, the Eternal City, for centuries regarded as the Alma Mater of the civilized world; and surely no less strange that the daughter cities of Paris and London should have connived at her lapse from grace, decency, and honour. Is the Europe of to-day with its world-wide influence and power to be ruled by the ghosts of the Borgia and the Medici of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? A few years ago no such question could have been seriously posed. That it is possible to ask this question now is due to accumulated evidence that other rulers besides Signor Mussolini, including our own, are not indisposed to allow it to be



answered in the affirmative; though they may well be unconscious of the source of their inspiration.

One of the steps to be taken towards the restoration of international order seems to be a reaffirmation of the Covenant of the League by those Powers who still regard it as a potentially valuable means of promoting collective security over a wide area, if not universally. The test of renewed loyalty should be reaffirmation of the Covenant in its entirety, without any whittling down of those provisions, intended to discourage aggression and impede its fruition, which are distasteful to potential rebels, and from the application of which the law-abiding may be tempted to flinch. Any who would not reaffirm would be held to have seceded, and their loss could be regarded with at least as much equanimity as their continued membership, whether rebellious and defiant, or merely luke-warm and insincere. An essential requirement would be the assurance that the Great Powers would honourably fulfil their obligations under the Covenant.

Although the authority of the League has been gravely damaged by recent events, it cannot justly be said that its machinery has failed, for the simple reason that it was deliberately prevented from acting until any action would have been too late. {At the beginning of 1935 Signor Mussolini was in no position to defy the rest of the world and to prepare for the conquest of Ethiopia at the same time. Neither his military arrangements nor the psychology of his people would have permitted it. Moreover he was so far from being an ally of Herr Hitler that only a few months previously he had been rattling his sabre on the Brenner Pass, in defiance of the German threat to absorb Austria. Had the League Council acted on the appeal before it at the January meeting, Signor Mussolini would

have had to delay the despatch of his army overseas until he knew what attitude the League would adopt, and how far it would be supported by individual powers. Action by the Council would have meant publicity, and the mobilization of public opinion throughout Europe in a sense unfavourable to the aggressor. With the Council in action it would have been impossible for the leading statesmen of the three leading powers of Europe to hold a solemn conclave at Stresa, and refrain by common consent from saying a word about Ethiopia, though the smoke of munition factories and the clang of forges pervaded the land, and the embarkation of troops and materials proceeded unceasingly at the ports.

Direct proof that the League was potentially efficacious as a restraining force, which an aggressor might only challenge at his peril, is provided by Signor Mussolini himself in his strongly-marked reluctance to face it. He could play off the French and British Governments effectively with allusions to the promises of the London Treaty of 1915 and their meagre fulfilment, and by making much of the German bogey. It stands out very clearly from the facts that the one thing that he really feared at the outset was intervention by the League, and that to frustrate this in the early stages of the dispute was essential to the success of his plans. The League was not an unsound conception, and the Covenant was not inherently unworkable. If in the event the Council was circumvented, and the League thereby rendered powerless to restrain aggression, this was due, not to inevitable impotence, but to the defiant chicanery of one of the great Powers, with what can only be called the connivance of two others.

Nor did the League lack means to arrest the aggression even after it had started. Sanctions if applied to war materials would have been effective, and the threat that

these would lead to an extensive war was clearly an Italian bluff. If they were of a nature to hamper seriously the war in Ethiopia, they must have entirely ruled out the possibility of a simultaneous war against the rest of Europe. Failure of League action at this juncture was no more inherent in the Covenant than it had been in the phase preceding the outbreak of war. It was due to the fact that two of the great Powers had already condoned the aggression, and thus disqualified themselves from taking the lead in the imposition of effective sanctions. The failure was not organic but functional, and blame attaches only to the aggressor and to those powers who lent themselves to his desire to circumvent the procedure of the League.

The feasibility of applying sanctions, and their efficacy when applied, were strikingly demonstrated in April 1933, when British engineers of the Metropolitan Vickers Company were sentenced to imprisonment in Russia. The news was received in London late on the night of the 19th. At 9.30 the next morning the King presided over a meeting of the Privy Council specially convened at Windsor Castle for the purpose, and signed a proclamation placing an embargo upon Russian imports into this country. Some three months later the prisoners were released.

It might be advisable for the League to change its name to something more in keeping with its limited membership, and more indicative of its primary purpose which was, and still should be, to deter the would-be disturber of the peace. It is clear that its founders in the years 1914 to 1919 were not thinking merely of an international debating society and a clearing-house for ideas of common interest, but of a league to enforce peace; and recognition of this truth should not be allowed to fade as the years pass. Reaffirmation of the League under a new set of signatures would have

the incidental advantage of preventing contemporary statesmen from treating the League as some unworkable product of their predecessors' impracticable idealism. Indeed, it might be considered whether there should not be a renewal of signatures every ten years. At least the wounded League should not be left to expire from lack of medical or surgical attention.

Further proof that the League was a potentially useful institution is to be seen in the fact that on 2nd May, 1935, France entered into a Mutual Assistance Agreement with Russia, which cites the Covenant in every Article (*vide* Appendix V). It had been particularly requested by Sir John Simon that this Agreement should be linked with the Covenant (Cmd. 5143, Nos. 13 and 18). A protocol binds the signatories to insist on prompt action by the Council of the League in the case of aggression. Clearly the League was thought to possess some value and power; but it was surely an indefensible abuse to treat its influence as something which the Powers dominating the Council might turn on or off to suit their view of what was expedient—off for Ethiopia and on for France. Obviously the League was entitled to expect something more than this kind of treatment, particularly from the British and French Governments who had so often professed their whole-hearted support of the Covenant.

In March 1935 the British Government issued a statement (Cmd. 4327) on Imperial Defence, starting with an exposition of foreign policy, from which the following is extracted :—

2. The establishment of peace on a permanent footing is the principal aim of British foreign policy. . . .

3. In recent years the chief methods by which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have

pursued the establishment of peace on a permanent foundation have been as follows:—

(1) By unswerving support of the League of Nations, which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom regard as essential machinery for promoting the preservation of peace by facilitating and regularizing the means of international co-operation.

(2) By the promotion, in co-operation with other nations, of international instruments designed to produce collective security and a sense of security among the nations. Among the more important may be mentioned:

(a) The Briand-Kellogg Pact of 1928 for the renunciation by every signatory of war as an instrument of policy.

(3) By efforts to promote international understanding in general, and in particular to bring back into the comity of nations all the countries which have been enemies in the late war.

Actually the British and French Governments at that time were acquiescing in a flagrant breach by Italy of the League Covenant and of the Briand-Kellogg Pact; and they were doing so to strengthen their opposition to a former enemy, rather than to bring her back to the comity of nations. The establishment of peace on a permanent footing is more likely to be advanced by consistent action than by statements which accord so imperfectly with facts.

In March 1936 the Italian armies were advancing through the territory of a fellow member of the League, ruthlessly employing every possible means of inflicting injury, including attacks on Red Cross units working for neutral humanitarian organizations. On the 4th March the British unit was deliberately bombed. On the 7th

German troops re-entered the Rhineland in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Locarno, and simultaneously Herr Hitler put forward an offer of conciliation and appeasement. On the 19th, France, Britain and Italy, with Belgium (as a signatory to the Locarno Treaty) addressed a formal complaint to the League regarding Germany's action. Recital of the complaint begins as follows (Cmd. 5134):—

“Whereas :

(1) Scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations is a fundamental principle of international life and an essential condition of the maintenance of peace ;

(2) It is an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a Treaty nor modify the stipulations thereof except with the consent of the other Contracting Parties ; . . .”

In all the circumstances, for these three Powers to put forward such a document, and to insist that its substance be adopted as a resolution by the Council, was surely to make a mockery of the League, and a farce of the whole system of international relationships.

So far the British Government have given no hint of their plans for dealing with the situation, except the adoption of a policy of re-armament. Reticence in foreign affairs is traditional and necessary, but it is one of the incidental damages done in the course of events narrated in these pages that reticence must now be suspect. It is a conspicuous anomaly of to-day that any attempt in Parliament to penetrate the veil of secrecy evokes the type of interchange across the floor of the House that used to be reserved for home politics and to be discountenanced where foreign affairs were concerned. The Government would surely serve the country better by making less frequent use

of statements regarding their actions in the recent past which the facts emphatically refute, and by acknowledging the need for a fundamental change in the conduct of foreign policy which these facts seem no less urgently to demand. Whatever errors may have been made must be quite well known to foreign governments, to writers on international affairs in the foreign Press, and to their readers. There are few real advantages in an attitude of reticence in foreign affairs, if this is chiefly operative at home.

In the processes of history in which chance has perhaps played as great a part as any of the virtues or vices, this country has become, in the words of Gladstone, "endowed with influence and power". Through circumstances which no one could control, a world-wide financial crisis led us in 1931 to a form of coalition government, unprecedented in peace time, which should impose on those in power a particularly high standard of conduct in all matters, and more especially at the present critical juncture in foreign affairs. Solution of the present difficulties calls for something more constructive than rearmament and more positive than the interchange of visits of courtesy. It calls not for adroit opportunism, but for the righting of specific wrongs, and the adoption of standards of conduct which would prevent their recurrence. Above all, it should be realized that an interlocking system of mutual condonation of acts which are individually wrong would be entirely unsound as a basis for peace and prosperity. Any such solution would be the negation of all reason and morality, and would go far to deprive Europe of any right to be called civilized, besides earning for its authors the just condemnation of posterity—if any be left with the inclination and the material for the study of the age in which we now live.

*London, December 1937.*

*SECOND STUDY*  
EUROPE AFTER 1918

August 1938





## CHAPTER IX

### SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT

THE previous study dealt primarily with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, with particular reference to the parts played by the Governments of France and the United Kingdom, and by the League of Nations, on the Council of which these two Powers, together with Italy, held a dominating position. The outstanding inference from the facts was that the first two Powers had knowingly turned a blind eye on aggression by the third, in the hope of contributing to European peace by placating an ally and so consolidating their united front against the resurgence of Germany. Thus the attack on Ethiopia appeared to be closely related to the state of tension in Europe created by Germany's increasing disinclination to accept indefinitely all the conditions imposed on her at Versailles. Some of these, as will appear in the course of the present study, she felt to be not only humiliating and unjust, but also dangerous, in that she was deprived even of purely defensive arms, though surrounded by groups of well-armed neighbours whose chief nexus was a common fear of herself.

The Covenant of the League had been made an integral part of the Treaty of Versailles, and an important feature of both documents was recognition that the reduction of armaments should be universal. The disarmament section of the Treaty was prefaced as follows :—

In order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of armaments of all nations, Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval, and air clauses which follow.

As soon as the League came into being it took action in the matter. It was at once recognized that disarmament and a sense of security were mutually interdependent, though there were divergent views as to which should have precedence of the other. The following brief history of the attempts to solve the problem is given by Mr. Arthur Henderson in the official Preliminary Report on the Work of the Disarmament Conference, of which he was President (League of Nations Publication IX, *Disarmament*, 1936, ix. 3, pp. 9-10):—

In execution of these obligations, the Council, in May 1920, set up, in virtue of Article 9 of the Covenant, a Permanent Advisory Commission for military, naval, and air questions, a body of technical experts appointed by the Members of the Council. The first Assembly of the League, however, meeting in September 1920, recognized that disarmament was more than a technical question and that, for its practical solution, it was necessary to consider a whole series of political, social, and economic problems. It accordingly decided that a Temporary Mixed Commission should be appointed composed of accepted authorities on the military, political, social, economic, and financial aspects of the subject. The Temporary Mixed Commission worked for four years. Its discussions centred mainly upon the ultimate relationship between disarmament and security and resulted in the submission to the Assembly in 1923 of a draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance.

The draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance was based on the fundamental idea that war as an instrument of aggression must henceforth be regarded as an international crime, and it combined the principle of a general international system of collective security with a system of

supplementary defensive agreements or regional pacts between particular nations. The draft Treaty was communicated to the Governments, but was not accepted as a satisfactory solution of the problem.

The Assembly in 1924 accordingly abandoned the draft Treaty and framed a more comprehensive plan, the Geneva Protocol of 1924, whereby an attempt was made to create a complete system of compulsory arbitration and resistance by common action to acts of aggression. The relationship between security and disarmament was again emphasized, the entry into force of the Protocol being made to depend explicitly on the adoption by a general Disarmament Conference of a plan for the reduction of armaments.

Discussions which took place in the Council in 1925 showed that the Protocol, accepted by the previous Assembly and signed by fourteen States, would not be generally accepted, and the Government of the United Kingdom, which was one of the States with views in opposition to the Protocol, suggested, as an alternative, that the Covenant should be supplemented by special arrangements to meet special needs.

The Protocol was accordingly set aside in favour of a partial application of the regional system, which was soon afterwards embodied in the Locarno Treaties signed on 16th October, 1925. These Treaties guaranteed the territorial *status quo* as between Belgium and Germany and as between Germany and France and provided for a peaceful settlement of disputes between these countries. Following their signature, Germany became a Member of the League in 1926.

Meanwhile, the Council, acting in accordance with a resolution adopted by the Assembly in September 1925,

set up a Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, which, from the spring of 1926, worked under the direction of the Council and submitted to that body in December 1930 a final report and a draft Convention. The work of the Preparatory Commission was supplemented by technical reports from a Committee of Budgetary Experts and by the report of Committee of Experts appointed to fix rules for the adoption of a standard horse-power measurement for aeroplane and dirigible engines. All these documents were sent to the Governments invited to take part in the General Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the Council in January and May 1931.

Mr. Henderson only recorded the facts that were relevant to a progress report on the Conference of which he was President. A more general narrative would involve recording that the rejection of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance was due to a Labour Government in this country, and the rejection of the Geneva Protocol to a Conservative Government, the action in both cases being supported by the Dominions. During the discussions in 1919 of the post-war settlement, France had desired to advance her Eastern frontier up to the left bank of the Rhine, a proposal disallowed by the representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States, who offered a Treaty of Guarantee as a substitute. This Treaty was accepted by the British Parliament conditionally on its being accepted in America. It was rejected by Congress, and the proposal therefore fell to the ground. These events took place before the League came into being, and were therefore not mentioned in Mr. Henderson's report. In all these instances the British attitude was quite consistent in its reluctance to enter into

commitments which might again involve military intervention in Europe. Nevertheless we had offered a guarantee in 1922 which was rejected by France under M. Poincaré because it did not include a detailed military convention.

It would be useless now to speculate on the question whether or not our acceptance of one or other of these proposals would have contributed to security and appeasement in Europe. The facts are, however, still relevant to this extent that, if we claim to have taken a lead in disarmament, we should recall that it was we who brought about the rejection of proposals which the League after three or four years of study considered to be a necessary preliminary to disarmament. Incidentally, if we are inclined to reproach the United States of America for being unwilling to become involved in the inter-state relations of Europe, we have to remember that we have displayed the same reluctance ourselves.

The Locarno Treaty, with its accompanying group of treaties, all signed on the same day, 16th October, 1925, which took the place of the rejected proposals, was based on a German suggestion made two years previously which had been rejected by France under M. Poincaré, who, being about to invade Germany and occupy the Ruhr, could not accept a non-aggression pact with Germany. It produced a marked relaxation of tension in Europe for the next two or three years, and from that point of view was a gratifying event. Actually its effect, as we shall see, can only have been superficial and temporary. [It consisted of non-aggression pacts and arbitration conventions between the principals, France, Germany, and Belgium, to which the United Kingdom and Italy subscribed as guarantors, and arbitration conventions involving Poland and Czechoslovakia. These were already fundamental conditions of League Membership, and the execution of such a complex

of regional treaties was to some extent redundant except on the assumption that there were doubts as to the efficacy of the League itself. Indeed, one of the articles provided that the Treaty would end when the League was strong enough to render its continuance unnecessary. The mutual assistance provisions depended on a judgement by the Council of the League; and apparently no action was possible under the Treaty which was not, in theory, at least, equally possible under the Covenant.

The Treaty must have pre-supposed either a re-armed Germany or a disarmed France, or at least some parity of armaments between them, as there could be no logic in a non-aggression pact between a disarmed Germany and a fully armed France. The relaxation of tension which had undoubtedly been achieved and the comparatively cordial relations which became established between M. Briand and Dr. Stresemann, were not made use of to settle the armament question between these two Powers. Some minor alleviation of the conditions which had been imposed on Germany at Versailles was, however, brought about. The Inter-Allied Military Commission was withdrawn in 1927 and the Rhineland was evacuated in 1930, that is to say in advance of the Versailles Treaty dates.

The main object of the Treaty of Locarno was, as we saw from Mr. Henderson's narrative, to induce such a feeling of security as would enable a start to be made on the project for general disarmament which formed an essential feature of the post-war settlement at Versailles, and which, in the eyes of the statesmen of that day, was to be the real safeguard of peace. Thus the continuing validity of the Treaty of Locarno as a measure of appeasement stood to be gravely compromised in the event of the Disarmament Conference proving unfruitful.

The entry of Germany into the League, which was to follow the conclusion of the Treaty of Locarno, was marred by an unfortunate contretemps (*vide International Relations since the Peace Treaties*, E. H. Carr, pp. 99-101). Three other Powers, Poland, Spain, and Brazil, seized the occasion to claim permanent seats on the League Council, on which the only two vacancies were those specifically reserved for Germany and Russia. To quote the work just mentioned :—

Unfortunately, Sir Austen Chamberlain committed himself to support the Spanish claim ; and thus encouraged, Briand, the new French Foreign Minister, espoused the cause of Poland. Both Spain and Brazil (unlike Poland) were non-permanent members of the Council, whose vote was therefore necessary for Germany's admission ; and they refused to give that vote unless their own claim were admitted. The imbroglio was complete. The Council could reach no decision, and the Assembly dispersed without having done anything at all. Germany, in spite of Locarno, remained outside the League.

Germany took the view, and with reason, that she alone had been promised a permanent seat on the Council as part of the Locarno bargain. She had therefore a substantial grievance.

A compromise was eventually arrived at whereby Poland accepted a semi-permanent seat—a new category of membership specially created to overcome this difficulty. Germany accepted this arrangement, but Spain and Brazil rejected it and withdrew from the League. As the result of this dispute nearly a year elapsed between the conclusion of the Locarno negotiations and the admission of Germany to the League. To quote Professor Carr again :—

At the Assembly of September 1926 Germany entered



the League amid scenes of enthusiasm and took her place as a permanent member of the Council. Nevertheless, an unpleasant impression remained in German minds that Germany could not count on a square deal at Geneva . . . encouragement had been given to the already strong anti-League party in Germany.

In August 1928 there was signed at Paris the so-called Kellogg-Briand Pact, renouncing war as an instrument of policy (*vide* Appendix II). The adherents to this pact eventually numbered sixty-five Powers, Germany being amongst their number. Following the *détente* resulting from the Treaty of Locarno, this pact seemed at that time to mark an important stage towards appeasement. At the present time it appears to do no more than provide the high-water mark from which may be measured the ebb of hope.

After the signature of the Treaty of Locarno, the preparatory work on disarmament was set in motion. Whether the subject was too intricate when considered in detail, whether some of the expert representatives were too enthusiastic in defending the use of their own particular arm, or whether there was a lack of sincerity on the part of some Governments, is a question into which it is now useless to enter. The work of the Preparatory Commission was not completed until the end of 1930, and the Disarmament Conference did not open until the 2nd February, 1932.

By this time the international situation had seriously deteriorated, and now formed an unfavourable background to the Conference. Japan had attacked China, to the openly proclaimed unconcern of the British Government (*vide* p. 48 *ante*), and two other wars were in progress in South America; whilst widespread economic difficulties and internal political movements in certain countries added to the general disquietude. Sixty nations were represented

at the Conference, and many of the delegations submitted sweeping proposals for disarmament. These are recorded in League of Nations Publication IX, *Disarmament* 1932, ix. 63, and are referred to in Mr. Henderson's report, already quoted.

Accounts of the Conference are given in a number of recent books, e.g. *International Relations since the Peace Treaties*, E. H. Carr; *Britain faces Germany*, A. L. Kennedy; *Inquest on Peace*, Vigilantes; and others. There is little in the official record of the Conference to support the claim (*vide* Statement on Defence of the 11th March, 1935, Cmd. 4827) that the British Government were "foremost among the nations in taking the initiative." The opening memorandum of the British Delegation was a meagre document, comprising about a dozen lines of print and mentioning five questions which it suggested "should be closely studied with a view to the adoption of such proposals as may seem practicable." Something more spirited might have been expected from them, seeing that nearly thirteen years had passed since the Treaty of Versailles, and six years since the Preparatory Disarmament Commission had started work. Their draft Convention of 16th March, 1933, was a valuable piece of work, but being produced more than a year after the Conference opened, and six months after Germany's first withdrawal, it must be considered as a contribution on the secretarial side, rather than as an initiative.

The United Kingdom seems to have been alone among the great Powers in standing out against the proposal for the entire abolition of bombing from the air. Sir John Simon spoke strongly in favour of the resolution of 23rd July, 1932, which led to Germany's first withdrawal from the Conference; and his announcement of 14th October, 1933, in which he acted as spokesman for the other great

Powers, was immediately followed by Germany's final withdrawal from the Conference and from the League. The question at issue on both occasions was Germany's disarmament and her neighbours' armament. The picture so often presented by Government spokesmen, of the United Kingdom taking the lead at the Disarmament Conference and in European appeasement, is not entirely founded on fact; and, as an attempt to acquit this country of a fair share of responsibility for the failure to achieve either disarmament or appeasement, it is less than just to other Powers.

The lapse of time since 1919, the inclusion of so many Powers in the Conference, and the immense amount of detail involved, with consequent divergencies of view, must have obscured the real nature and purpose of the proceedings, which was to arrange for the fulfilment by the victorious allies of their share of the Treaty of Versailles in regard to reduction of armaments. The vanquished Powers had been compelled to disarm, and the obligation, implied in the statement that their disarmament was an initial step in a general limitation of armaments of all nations, had never been fulfilled. The relationship between France and Germany formed the core of the problem of European appeasement, the achievement of which was an essential prerequisite to the reduction of armaments. To treat this merely as one of the difficulties to be got over at an all-world congress on every aspect of warfare was too optimistic. The six years, 1925-30, devoted to the detailed technical work of the Preparatory Commission, were fore-doomed to be fruitless, unless the prime cause of trouble were first removed.

The Treaty of Locarno, as already noted, was not by itself of a nature to make a really permanent contribution to the appeasement of Europe, though it would have served well as a first step in this direction. It did not touch the

fundamental problem presented by the fact that disarmed Germany was confronted by armed and distrustful neighbours, most of whom had already been worked into alliances with France (e.g. Belgium, Poland, and the Little Entente States—Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia), a position that Germany, not altogether unnaturally, felt to be both humiliating and dangerous. The value of this Treaty was comparative rather than absolute: it was an improvement on what had gone before. To France it must have seemed an advance on her abortive attempts to obtain "security" by occupation of the Rhineland, or by guarantees involving the United States and/or the United Kingdom, or by the Protocol of Geneva. To Germany, still down-trodden and humiliated, the execution of this Treaty, originating in her own suggestion, freely signed by her, and accompanied by an invitation to join the League, must have appeared as the opening of a new era of appeasement in which she would have equality of status with other great Powers. To the United Kingdom it was a relief to feel that at last we had been able to please everybody. On the 17th October, 1925, the day after the initialling of the Locarno Pact, *The Times*' leading article was in this key:—  
". . . the worst of the long travail is over at last . . . the light of a new dawn is at last breaking upon the world."  
In actual fact the Locarno series of treaties did little more than embody France's distrust of Germany, and Germany's inferiority of status, a combination of factors which could hardly be expected to form a permanent basis of European peace. In the general rejoicings no one seems to have noticed that the semblance of appeasement might be illusory, and that the skeleton was still there, sitting at the feast.

To return to Mr. Henderson's narrative, the Disarmament Conference was at first concerned with its own

organization for the disposal of business, with the reception of delegations of bodies desirous of making their views known, and with the study of the suggestions that had been submitted to it by the various Governments represented. This phase closed with a comprehensive survey and a resolution of the 23rd July, 1932. During the discussion of the resolution the German delegation declared officially "that the German Government could not undertake to continue to take part in the work of the Conference unless its proceedings were in future conducted on the basis of a recognition of legal equality between the States." When work was resumed two months later an intimation was received from the German Government to the effect that "as its efforts to clear up through diplomatic channels the question of the recognition of the principle of equality of rights as between nations had proved unavailing, Germany was unable to take part in the further work of the Conference. It would, however, follow the proceedings of the Conference with interest, and its further attitude would be determined by the course which they might take."

It is to be noted that this step was taken by pre-Hitler Germany, the Germany of the Weimar republican constitution, under the leadership of Herr von Papen who had recently succeeded Dr. Brüning. It appears to have been the last occasion on which the pre-Hitler regime made its mark on contemporary European history. It is of particular interest from the point of view of the present study as showing that the revolt of Germany, which from this point onwards increasingly dominates the European scene, had begun before the emergence of Herr Hitler as the national leader.

This German move evoked a response from the British Government, headed as follows :-

DECLARATION OF THE POLICY OF HIS MAJESTY'S  
GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM ON DISARMA-  
MENT IN CONNECTION WITH GERMANY'S CLAIM TO EQUALITY  
OF RIGHTS, PRESENTED TO THE BUREAU OF THE DISARMA-  
MENT CONFERENCE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

This was presented by Sir John Simon to the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva on the 17th November, 1932, and was published as Cmd. 4189. The present writer confesses that after reading this document through several times he found it somewhat difficult to interpret. He therefore sets it down in Mr. Henderson's condensation (*loc. cit.*, p. 19).

On the 17th November, 1932, Sir John Simon (United Kingdom) submitted to the Bureau a series of proposals embodying a programme of work for the Conference intended more particularly to meet the claim to equality of rights submitted by the German Government. Sir John Simon emphasized that, although the Treaty of Versailles was a binding document and could only be modified by common consent, the disarmament imposed on Germany was clearly intended to be the prelude to a substantial measure of general disarmament which had yet to be effected.

His proposals began with a suggestion that all the European States should solemnly affirm that they would not in any circumstances attempt to solve any present or future differences between them by resort to force, and it was emphasized in this connection that acknowledgment of the moral right to parity of treatment put forward by Germany entailed upon Germany as upon other countries the acceptance of such an obligation. It was then urged that the claims of Germany to equality should be met so

far as they did not involve measures of rearmament. The limitations imposed on the armaments of Germany should be contained in the same Disarmament Convention as that defining the limitations to be imposed on the armaments of other nations; they should last for the same period and be subject to the same methods of revision. In the new Disarmament Convention, the principle should be embodied that the kinds of arms permitted to other countries should not be prohibited to Germany. In other words, the principle of qualitative equality should be acknowledged.

This principle applied to categories of arms and not to the amounts, which must be separately and subsequently treated. By what means and by what stages the principle of qualitative equality could be applied must be the subject of detailed discussions in which it was essential that Germany should join.

The general proposal, thus defined, was supplemented by detailed proposals as to naval material, tanks, mobile land guns, air forces, and effectives.

It seems to have been acknowledged that on grounds of equity Germany should be entitled to "qualitative" rearmament, i.e. she was not in theory to be prohibited from possessing any category of armament admissible to her neighbours. On the other hand no "quantitative" commitments were made, and the extent to which she was to be allowed to rearm herself was made subject to discussion in which she was to join. One of the main inducements held out to Germany as a concession to her self-respect was that whatever limitations might be imposed upon her armaments would be embodied in the same document which would define the rate of reduction of her neighbours' armaments. From the point of view of a German this document proposing

to admit her claims to equality " so far as they did not involve measures of rearmament," may well have seemed unsatisfying in view of the obvious and sustained reluctance of her neighbours to reduce their own armaments.

To resume the narrative of Mr. Henderson :—

During the autumn of 1932, negotiations took place between the representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, French, German, and Italian Governments in order to render possible the continuation of the work of the Conference with the collaboration of Germany. Agreement was reached on the 11th December, 1932.

The result of these negotiations was incorporated in the following communication made by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the President of the Conference on the 12th December, 1932 :—

1. The Governments of the United Kingdom, France, and Italy have declared that one of the principles that should guide the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments should be the grant to Germany, and to the other Powers disarmed by treaty, of equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations, and that this principle should find itself embodied in the Convention containing the conclusions of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.

This declaration implies that the respective limitations of the armaments of all States should be included in the proposed Disarmament Convention. It is clearly understood that the methods of application of such equality of rights will be discussed by the Conference.

2. On the basis of this declaration, Germany has signified her willingness to resume her place at the Confer-



ence for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.

3. The Governments of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy are ready to join in a solemn reaffirmation to be made by all European States that they will not in any circumstances attempt to resolve any present or future differences between the signatories by resort to force. This shall be done without prejudice to fuller discussions on the question of security.

4. The five Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy declare that they are resolved to co-operate in the Conference with the other States there represented in seeking without delay to work out a Convention which shall effect a substantial reduction and a limitation of armaments, with provision for future revision with a view to further reduction.

On this declaration and the formula "equality of rights in a system of security for all nations" Germany resumed her seat at the Conference. Herr Hitler became Chancellor on the 30th January, 1933. In March the British Government Delegation submitted a draft Disarmament Convention, which was adopted by the Conference as a basis for discussion. The proceedings disclosed three irreconcilable reluctances. The armed Powers were reluctant to make any important reduction in their armaments; Germany was reluctant to remain indefinitely disarmed; whilst the Disarmament Conference was naturally enough reluctant to agree that the first fruits of its labours should be a permit to re-arm.

In the upshot Germany decided to withdraw from the Conference, the decision being conveyed to the President on the 14th October, 1933, in the following terms:—

On behalf of the German Government, I have the

honour to make to you the following communication : In the light of the course which recent discussions of the Powers concerned have taken in the matter of disarmament, it is now clear that the Disarmament Conference will not fulfil what is its sole object—namely, general disarmament. It is also clear that this failure of the Conference is due solely to the unwillingness on the part of the highly armed States to carry out their contractual obligation to disarm. This renders impossible the satisfaction of Germany's recognized claim to equality of rights, and the condition on which the German Government agreed at the beginning of this year again to take part in the work of the Conference thus no longer exists. The German Government is accordingly compelled to leave the Disarmament Conference.—Baron von Neurath.

To this communication the President replied two days later as follows :—

I have now communicated to the General Commission Your Excellency's telegram of the 14th October announcing the decision of the German Government to discontinue participation in the work of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments and indicating the reasons for that decision. The German Government took this step at the moment when the Bureau had just decided to submit to the General Commission a definite programme. This programme, to be completed within a limited period, provided for the realization progressively, in accordance with resolutions of the Conference in which Germany herself concurred, of reductions of armaments comparable to those contemplated in the draft Convention submitted to the General Commission. This programme provided also, with corresponding measures of

security, for the realization of equality of rights, which the German Government has always placed in the forefront of its demands. I regret therefore that this grave decision should have been taken by your Government for reasons which I am unable to accept as valid.—Henderson, President of the Conference for the reduction and limitation of Armaments.

The difficulty was still that which had led to Germany's withdrawal from the Conference a year previously. She was offered a theoretical release from the legal disqualification to possess arms; but she was not authorized to give practical effect to this release, and she saw no signs of her neighbours being prepared to accept any measure of disarmament.

After the withdrawal of Germany the Conference gradually languished, and finally expired towards the end of 1934, though it was never formally wound up.

## CHAPTER X

### SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT (*continued*)

THE failure to remove Germany's grievance, which did not lack reason, wrecked first the Disarmament Conference and, later, the Locarno Treaty. As Germany has since, by her military re-occupation of the Rhineland, repudiated the Locarno Treaty, and concurrently the guarantors (Italy and the United Kingdom) have parted company, all comments on this once highly applauded treaty are now of little more than post-mortem interest. From this point of view there are some features of the group of treaties, subsidiary to the main Locarno Treaty, which seem to deserve notice. There were four separate arbitration treaties or conventions between Germany on the one hand, and France, Belgium, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, respectively, on the other, the wording being identical. The purpose of each document was to set up a Permanent Conciliation Commission, consisting of two nationals and three neutrals, to whom—but only by agreement between the parties—a dispute might be referred, in the event of failure to settle it “by the normal methods of diplomacy,” and before submitting it to an arbitral tribunal or to the Permanent Court of International Justice. These Permanent Conciliation Commissions were to be set up within three months of the entry into force of the treaty or convention. No record of their having been called into being has been found, and their activities, if any, do not appear to have received much publicity; though there was surely scope for conciliation on the arms question between France and Germany.

One of the concluding articles provides that the Conciliation Commission, or the arbitral tribunal, or the Permanent Court of International Justice, "shall lay down within the shortest possible time the provisional measures to be adopted. It shall similarly be the duty of the Council of the League of Nations, if the question is brought before it, to ensure that suitable provisional measures are taken." The document throws no light on which of these four bodies would be considered the appropriate one to deal with a particular class of question, or what course would be adopted if the parties, having failed to settle the dispute by the normal methods of diplomacy, should disagree as to which of the four should be the referee.

In an annex to the Locarno Treaty the other signatories gave Germany an interpretation of Article 16 of the League Covenant, as follows :—

We are not in a position to speak in the name of the League, but in view of the discussions which have already taken place in the Assembly and in the Commissions of the League of Nations, and after the explanations which have been exchanged between ourselves, we do not hesitate to inform you of the interpretation which, in so far as we are concerned, we place upon Article 16.

In accordance with that interpretation the obligations resulting from the said article on the Members of the League must be understood to mean that each State Member of the League is bound to co-operate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant and in resistance to any act of aggression to an extent which is compatible with its military situation and takes its geographical position into account.

Germany, as a disarmed State, was naturally unwilling to incur obligations in respect of possible military sanctions ;

particularly as these might have been invoked against Russia, a powerful neighbour with whom at that time she was on friendly terms and towards whom the other Locarno Powers were then not very well disposed. The above interpretation, however, could be taken to apply to any State, and to cover non-military as well as military sanctions. It introduced an element of individual choice into a provision of the Covenant, the efficacy of which depended almost entirely upon the certainty that it would be universally applied. To some extent, therefore, it impaired the collective principle, and thus pricked the League in a vital spot.

Before concluding the narrative of this sequence of events, there is still something more to be said about the Disarmament Conference, which originated, as we have already noted (p. 87), in a brief preamble to a section of the Treaty of Versailles. In the circumstances and in the context this did not necessarily call for an all-world conference on every aspect of war. The scope of the eventual Conference seems to have become enlarged by the Geneva Protocol of 1924, which in Article 17 called for an "International Conference for the Reduction of Armaments." Although the Geneva Protocol fell to the ground, it seems to have bequeathed the idea of a world conference, though the nature of the problem pointed rather to the need for a localized conference, confined to the European Powers most immediately concerned.

Both these documents were directed towards the quantitative aspect of armament, and contained no allusion to the qualitative aspect. The breakdown of the universal conference, on the one point of Germany's status in Europe, carried with it such proposals as the total abolition of air bombing, which was advocated by many of the Powers. We must recognize that we have less right than other

Powers to complain of the failure to salvage this item from the wreckage of the Conference. The official record of the Conference (Mr. Henderson's *Report*, p. 89) gives the impression that but for the action of our delegation the first reading (8th June, 1933) of the draft convention would have gone through on the basis of the acceptance of this proposal. Their insistence on reserving the right to employ air bombing "for police purposes in certain outlying regions" caused the decision on air bombing as a whole to be adjourned to the second reading. Owing to the withdrawal of Germany three months later, and the resulting collapse of the Conference, there was no second reading.

On the 7th July Mr. Eden, then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, informed the House of Commons that the British reservation on air bombing would not be pressed to the point of causing the Conference to break down, and this assurance was afterwards conveyed to the Conference by the British delegation. This declaration came too late to influence the debates on the first reading of the draft Disarmament Convention, and as already noted the matter never reached the second reading. It can be argued that the proposal to abolish air bombing would have fallen to the ground in any case with the failure of the Conference, and that therefore the British reservation was a matter of minor importance. On the other hand our attitude at the Conference makes it more difficult now for us to make an effective protest against the manner in which this weapon is being extensively used to-day. Lord Londonderry, Air Minister at the time, and chief British delegate concerned with this feature of the Disarmament Conference, did not regard the British reservation as an unimportant matter. In a speech in the House of Lords on the 22nd May, 1935, he took credit for the stand which

he had made on this question, *vide* the following extract :—

In 1932 the Disarmament Conference assembled, and almost its earliest discussions were centred around the possibility of the total abolition of air forces or at least of the abolition of the artillery of the air, the bombing aeroplane, which is the weapon which is the distinctive arm of the Air Force and to which it owes its separate existence. Through that period, difficult for any Air Minister and particularly for one who, like myself, has always been convinced of the prime importance of the maintenance of an effective air arm to the security of this country, I kept impressing upon my colleagues and upon the country generally the vital nature and place of the Royal Air Force in the scheme of our defences. I had the utmost difficulty at that time, amid the public outcry, in preserving the use of the bombing aeroplane even on the frontiers of the Middle East and India, where it is only owing to the presence of the Air Force that we have controlled these territories without the old and heavy cost in blood and treasure. I felt certain that when the ideals of abolition were examined practically they would be discovered to be inapplicable in the state of the world to-day. We could not put the clock back. Limitation, not abolition, was all we could really hope for. Limitation, I foresaw, was the ultimate policy, which I continually urged ; the policy for which I and my advisers of the Air Ministry were constantly preparing.

The effect of this reservation would obviously have been to confer a monopoly of bombing aircraft on those Powers with overseas possessions, that is to say on the Locarno Powers other than Germany, and especially on ourselves with our wide regions. This effect of our reservation made it surely an untimely step to take at the Disarmament



Conference, upon which so much depended. It was also most unwise, even from the point of view of self-interest, as this country is perhaps more vulnerable to air attack than any other in Europe. That it was doubtfully sound, even from the "police" point of view, must occur to any one who is aware that twenty-five years ago the Khyber Pass was held by a battalion of native levies, and has now to be held by a brigade of regulars, in spite of the extensive use of the air arm on the Indian frontier.

The attitude which had been unyieldingly maintained towards Germany at the Disarmament Conference must have lowered the prestige of the German Government in the eyes of the German public, and it had as one of its consequences the emergence of Herr Hitler as leader of the German people. Under his leadership and with Germany outside the League, the armament question entered a new phase, in which exchanges of memoranda between the four Powers principally concerned took the place of debates at a world conference. In January 1934 each of them produced a memorandum, and these are reproduced as Cmd. 4512. These documents—except the Italian—are couched in such guarded terms as almost to convey to the reader an impression of needless prolixity, and at times of evasion of the issue. The crucial point was, as before, the attempt to reconcile Germany's disarmament with her neighbour's armament. The French declaration of the 1st January appeared to contemplate two phases of reduction of armaments. During the first, which was of unspecified duration, Germany was not to rearm, but only to reorganize her effectives on a model to become standardized for all Powers. During the second phase she would be authorized to build up gradually to a point at which her ascending scale would intersect the descending scale of France. The German

reply of the 19th had no difficulty in showing that this would again postpone indefinitely the achievement of equality, that it was impracticable to organize a standardized force without the appropriate arms, and that the French memorandum was silent on the subject of France's African forces. France proposed to accept a fifty per cent reduction of her air force, provided other Powers would do the same; but this would add nothing to Germany's security, as she was still to have none.

The British declaration, dated the 31st, proposed a limit of four years for the phase of reorganization of effectives, and noted that France would be called upon to reduce considerably her overseas forces. With regard to the Air, the British declaration, while deprecating the acquisition of aircraft by those Powers not hitherto entitled to possess them, frankly admitted that these Powers could not be asked to postpone their claim for long. It was accordingly proposed that if the armed Powers could not within two years agree upon abolition all countries should become entitled to possess aircraft. The expansion of air force by these Powers and its contraction by others, would be spread over the next eight years; so that by the end of ten years Germany would attain parity with the other great Powers.

The Italian declaration, also dated the 31st, stresses two aspects of this question, namely the justice of Germany's claim to equality of rights, and the importance of dealing frankly and promptly with the whole problem. It says:—

The Italian Government desire, however, to declare in all frankness that only clear intentions clearly defined without delay, not subordinated to clauses or conditions that are already *a priori* unacceptable to other Powers, and of such a scope as to create a technically, juridically, and morally sound position for the negotiators, would offer any hope of success. In the contrary event, we shall only

have a renewal of academic declarations and counter-declarations, of discussions and of recriminations which will not and cannot do anything to avoid the regrettable events to which allusion has been made.

There are other passages of a like nature, and all equally to the point. It was easier in Italy than in France to see that Germany could not be expected always to remain deprived of armaments, yet surrounded by well-armed neighbours ; and this would account for Signor Mussolini's more abrupt seizure of the nettle. The Italian memorandum made certain concrete proposals, including the abolition of chemical warfare, and of the bombing of civil populations ; and it concluded with a plea for such progress on the general question as would permit of a meeting of the four Powers, to be followed by Germany's return to the League.

This document presents the problem with a brevity and lucidity unapproached by any of the others. The fundamental question of Germany's status *vis-à-vis* other Powers is reached in the seventh line, and is set out clearly without lengthy preamble (see further extract, p. 114). It might, however, have been a more effective aid to European appeasement if it had not coincided with the issue of a decree imposing military training on all Italian boys from the age of eight<sup>1</sup> upwards.

The exchanges are continued in Cmd. 4559. A French memorandum of the 14th February, 1934, taxes Germany with evasion and an unyielding attitude, and maintains the ground already taken up. In what would seem to be a rather disingenuous passage the French Government alludes to the limitation of oversea effectives, presenting this as if it were a question of the forces maintained in France for service oversea, whereas the real question was that of the forces

<sup>1</sup> Reduced to six on 18th September, 1934

maintained oversea for service in France. The French Government refused to answer a number of quite relevant questions. A German rejoinder of the 13th March brought out no new point. These documents left the armament question between Germany and France still in the state of "academic declaration and counter-declaration, of discussions and recriminations," the dangers of which had been rightly stressed by Signor Mussolini. A conversation in Rome on the 26th February, briefly recorded, between Mr. Eden and Signor Mussolini, led to no more than a confirmation of what the Italian declaration had already said.

In a French memorandum of the 19th March, 1934, the British Government is taken to task for having in their endeavours "to reconcile the principles respected by France and the attitude taken up by Germany," suggested some immediate rearmament of Germany and some immediate disarmament of France. The memorandum continues:—

It is the very conception of such a plan of disarmament which calls forth the most serious objections. However great may be the desire of France to sign an equitable convention, she can neither understand nor admit that exaggerated pretensions to rearmament put forward on one side should constitute an argument for asking other Powers to agree to reductions of armaments which do harm to the interests of their security.

The whole document is in this key, and there was still the same rigid refusal to admit any justice in the German claim. This was typical of the attitude of France towards this question from the very beginning. Her Government seemed unable to realize that it would probably lead first to clandestine rearmament in Germany, then, when this had proceeded far enough, to open and unilateral repudiation of all limitations, and finally to an unrestricted armament

race. By implication this memorandum invoked the aid of the League of Nations and of all neighbours, particularly the United Kingdom, with whom a military alliance seems to have been tentatively solicited. There was a note of increasing fear of Germany, and of reproach towards this country, as if it were felt that we were inclined to countenance the acquisition by Germany of the land armaments that were a menace to France rather than to ourselves.

The Italian memorandum of the 31st January, 1934, had emphasized in very cogent language the danger of continued refusal to come to terms with Germany, a warning which should have been unnecessary, but should not have passed unheeded :—

The Italian Government are convinced that an examination of the problem of "disarmament" with reference to the position of Germany as well as to the general situation, cannot but show that we have well-nigh reached the extreme limit of time available for overcoming the deadlock in which we have found ourselves since June last.

The Italian Government think it unnecessary to dwell on this premise. It will be enough to mention the existence of clear and numerous indications which go to prove that if the solution be further delayed rearmament, instead of a debated question, will become a question which may or might be practically solved in an unilateral manner. The gravity of such a fact is self-evident, in view of the increased difficulties which it would create for a peaceful international and juridical solution of the problem of equality, for a European *détente* and for the possibilities of reaching a reasonable convention of effective disarmament in a not too distant future. It is on the other hand certain that the results will be a renewed spirit of mutual

suspicion, the division of Europe into hostile groups, and a race in armaments.

From this premise the Italian Government deduce that each Government must now assume their own responsibilities, decide to adopt a definite attitude, and be prepared to make it known publicly. . . .

The danger that, if no agreement is reached, the question of equality may, in fact, be solved independently of agreements tending to sanction it and to regulate the method of its achievement.

Although this view was eminently sound, it is fair to recall that it could only recently have dawned on Signor Mussolini, as Italy had been associated with the decisions on this very subject which led to Germany's temporary withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference in October 1932, and to her final withdrawal from the Conference and from the League in October 1933. Or was it that Machiavelli's disciple foresaw all along that an unyielding attitude towards Germany's claims would drive her from the League, intensify the difficulties of a European settlement and the fears of France, thus creating a situation which might be turned to Italy's advantage? We may recall the narrative of Marshal de Bono (p. 34 *ante*):—

It was the autumn of 1933. The Duce had spoken to no one of the coming operations in East Africa; only he and I knew what was going to happen, and no indiscretion occurred by which the news could reach the public.

It is probable that in the autumn of 1933 Italy's policy in Europe was to a great extent governed by the momentous decision to seize by force an empire in East Africa; and France's fear of Germany might be a trump card later on.

Returning from this conjectural digression to the main

theme, a German Government memorandum of the 16th April, 1934, expressed readiness to accept with important reservations the United Kingdom memorandum of the 31st January, 1934 (p. 111 *ante*). In particular they were not prepared to forgo aerial defence machines for the two years which had been suggested, but they were prepared to accept a numerical strength equal to thirty per cent of the total of their neighbours, or fifty per cent of the aircraft possessed by France, whichever was the less. This would satisfy her for the first five years of a ten-year convention, but during the second five years she claimed that "the necessary reductions and increases should be made so that she should attain full equality of numbers with the principal air Powers at the end of the ten-year convention." The memorandum which is quite brief concludes as follows :—

The German Government are also prepared to agree to the postponement of the reductions of armaments of other Powers until the end of the fifth year of the convention, the measure of disarmament laid down in the United Kingdom memorandum being carried out during the second five years of the convention. All the other proposals made in the United Kingdom memorandum, which would be unaffected by these modifications, such, for example, as supervision, are accepted by the German Government. The German Government continue to recognize the Treaties of Locarno. They consider that Germany's return to the League can only be dealt with after the solution of the question of disarmament and above all of their equality of rights.

In a memorandum of the 17th April, 1934, addressed to the British Government, the French Government again inveighs against Germany, the extent of whose unauthorized rearmament had just been disclosed by published budget

figures. No change of attitude is revealed. France professes loyalty to the League, and regrets that Germany shows no sign of returning to that body, and so facilitating the resumption of work by the Disarmament Conference.

Though not mentioned in any of the documents, an added source of anxiety to France at this time was the *rapprochement* between Germany and Poland. The achievement of this was one of Herr Hitler's early aims on coming into power as Chancellor in January 1933, and an agreement between them had been signed in January 1934, thus compromising part of France's "security" system.

The White Paper, Cmd. 4559, in which these documents are reproduced, contains also an appeal by the Disarmament Conference Delegations of five neutral Powers, Denmark, Spain, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, drawing attention to the dangers of allowing this situation to continue, and urging the completion of the work of the Disarmament Conference. No further White Papers on disarmament have been issued.

The reflection is unescapable that France, the United Kingdom, and Italy had largely themselves to blame for the deadlock on disarmament. It was inconceivable that Germany would accept indefinitely a status of inferiority and of impaired sovereignty; and it was unreasonable to expect her to remain unarmed in the armed camp of Europe, hemmed in by a system of alliances promoted by France. It was inevitable that such an arrangement would eventually come to an end; and quite clear that the only choice lay between ending it by agreement, or allowing it to be ended by revolt. That it has been ended by revolt is a matter for which Germany cannot in justice be held solely, or even principally, to blame. A large share of responsibility must rest upon the French Government who appear, as a matter



of considered policy, to have preferred that the rearmament of Germany should be illegal and uncontrolled, rather than legalized and controlled. The British and Italian Governments at this time held the contrary view, but they were unable to impose its acceptance on their ally, who evidently thought that it was better to put Germany technically in the wrong than to come to terms with her.

There had recently been a change of opinion on this subject. In the previous October the Powers had refused to sanction any immediate rearmament of Germany, and Germany had therefore withdrawn from the Conference and from the League. On the 24th November Sir John Simon, and on the 27th Mr. Baldwin, in speeches in the House of Commons, had pointed out that the alternatives were regulated and unregulated rearmament of Germany, and they had emphatically pronounced in favour of the former of these alternatives. Germany's withdrawal from the Conference had converted the British Government to a view of this question which, had they adopted it a few weeks earlier, might have prevented the breakdown of the Conference and the unbridled armament race which has since ensued.

## CHAPTER XI

### SUGGESTED SECURITY PACTS

APPARENTLY abandoning hope of the success of disarmament negotiations, France, in June 1934, put forward a proposal for an Eastern Pact, or Treaty of Regional Assistance, to be signed by Poland, Russia, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This inaugurated a new phase of diplomatic activity, the records of which are contained in a Blue Book entitled *Diplomatic Discussions directed towards securing an European Settlement*, June 1934 to March 1936, Cmd. 5143.

The Pact, which is only given in brief outline, was to comprise a group of treaties on the Locarno model, with France and Russia occupying a position somewhat analogous to that of the United Kingdom and Italy in the Locarno Treaty. Germany's reply of 10th September, 1934, showed that she was unwilling to enter into a pact of mutual assistance with Russia, and was moreover, on general grounds, reluctant to be drawn into such pacts, whilst being denied equality of status and the right to possess armaments. She feared that she might "make herself the battle-ground for all possible conflagrations in Europe and involve herself in dangers which no serious advocate of such a pact can possibly expect her to face." It was argued that even if the treaty were made fully reciprocal, so that the guarantees of assistance might operate in favour of Germany—this was not so in the original draft—there would be no real advantage to her. "The German Government cannot imagine it a practical reality that Germany, one day, should be defended

in her own territory by Soviet Russian troops against an attack in the West or by French troops against an attack in the East."

The draft proposal, which purported to be "in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations," came to nothing, but some of the provisions throw light on the attitude of certain Powers towards the League.

6. Where one contracting country could benefit from the provisions of Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant of the League, the other signatories would undertake to secure a complete application of such provisions by the League of Nations.

Thus the pact would include a formal provision whereby the League would be lobbied into activity if this would serve the interests of any of the signatories: and presumably be lulled into inaction if circumstances should make this desirable. Another clause reads: "No support would be given by any of the signatories to an aggressor country not a party to the treaty." The members of the group were thus to have special privileges as regards aggression. This proposal was commended by Sir John Simon to the German Government with the remark that it was "unexceptionable," and with the earnest hopes of His Majesty's Government that they would accept it. Rather more than six months later the League Council, as we have seen, was turning a deaf ear to the appeal of Ethiopia against Italy.

It should be recalled that for some months before this draft pact was produced Germany had been fostering a Nazi movement in Austria. This culminated, on the 25th July, 1934, in an abortive *coup d'état* in Vienna and the murder of the Austrian Chancellor, Herr Dollfuss, whereupon Signor Mussolini had instantly moved several divisions on to the Brenner Pass, and made one or two extremely bellicose

speeches. Elaborate military manoeuvres were entered into, with the Duce in supreme command. These events, which intervened between the formulation of the French proposal and Germany's reply, contributed to an unfavourable background for the negotiation of an Eastern Pact.

France and Russia continued to press for the conclusion of the Eastern Pact, and on the 5th December, 1934, affirmed this in a joint declaration in which they undertook not to engage in any negotiations with other parties which might compromise the achievement of this aim. It was on this date, as it happened, that the Wal Wal incident took place, giving rise to the conflict between Italy and Ethiopia. From this point onwards, therefore, the development of the old-standing European difficulty must be viewed in parallel with the train of events which had been set in motion in East Africa.

A joint declaration by the British and French Governments was issued on the 3rd February, 1935, from which an extract has already been given (p. 65). The British Government also stated that they were to be counted among the Powers which would take part in consultation if the independence of Austria were threatened. The declaration reiterates the argument that Germany was not entitled to modify unilaterally the conditions of the Peace Treaties, and maintains that the settlement must be based on the terms of the joint declaration of 11th December, 1932, regarding "equality of rights in a system of security" (p. 101 *ante*). A new suggestion is that of a reciprocal five-Power regional agreement to include Germany, as well as Italy and Belgium, under which "the signatories would undertake immediately to give the assistance of their air forces to whichever of them might be the victim of unprovoked aerial aggression by one of the contracting parties."

Like the Locarno Treaty and the draft Eastern Pact, this suggestion possessed the quality of unreality, inasmuch as it was founded on the distrust felt by four of the parties towards the fifth, and it was impossible to disguise the fact that it was to be in reality an alliance of the four against the one. It needed some stretch of imagination to regard such a pact as fulfilling the principle of "equality of rights in a system of security," upon which it purported to be based.

The German reply, dated 14th February, 1935, welcomes such a suggestion, but deprecates too wide a discussion to start with, and solicits as a first step a direct exchange of views with the British Government. In consequence Sir John Simon visited Berlin on the 25th March, and elicited the statement that the German Government favoured the suggestion for an air pact between the Locarno Powers, and that she was not prepared to return to the League as a country of inferior status, the lack of colonies being specifically cited as an example of what Herr Hitler meant by inferiority. The discussions touched also upon the Eastern Pact suggested by France in June 1934, and Germany made it clear that she was not prepared to enter a pact which bound her to mutual assistance. She advocated a series of non-aggression and arbitration and conciliation treaties, provision for mutual consultation in the event of any threat of aggression, and refusal of aid to any aggressor. An outline of these proposals was handed to Sir John Simon by Baron von Neurath. In particular she was opposed—as she had said in September—to entering any mutual assistance pact with Russia, and she was not prepared to contemplate the inclusion of Lithuania in any pact of non-aggression.

Between the German invitation of the 14th February, and Sir John Simon's visit to Berlin on the 25th March, an important event had occurred which is not mentioned in the

Blue Book. On the 16th March, 1935, Germany repudiated the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, and re-introduced conscription. This incident, though it influenced the subsequent negotiations, only produced a temporary interruption, which is hardly noticeable in the narrative presented by the documents in the Blue Book.

In a telegram of 11th April to the British Ambassador at Berlin, Sir John Simon put the question whether Germany would refuse to join an Eastern Pact if it were supplemented by mutual assistance arrangements between other signatories. He advanced the view that even if Germany were herself averse from entering into mutual assistance compacts, there was no reason why she should refrain from joining the main pact, just because others—for example France and Russia—entered into subsidiary pacts of mutual assistance.

The German Government, in a reply handed the following day by Baron von Neurath to the British Ambassador, stated that they were not prepared to accede to the Eastern Pact in its proposed form. They were, however, prepared to give their consent to such a collective security pact if:—

First, it were based on mutual and general obligations of non-aggression and arrangements for arbitration ; and

Secondly, in the case of a breach of the peace, a consultative procedure were provided for ;

Thirdly, German Government would be ready, while emphasizing the difficulty of clearly defining an aggressor, to adhere to general measures for withholding support from such an aggressor.

The German Government still stands by this offer to-day.

They dissented from the view of Sir John Simon in the following terms :—

The amplification of pacts of non-aggression and no-force pacts which is considered necessary by various Governments, through agreements for military assistance, rests upon an inherent contradiction. Either one believes in obligations which have been freely undertaken or one does not believe in them; if one believes in them, the necessity of such military agreements is not apparent. But if one doubts the sincere fulfilment of a non-aggression obligation, this doubt is equally justified in regard to the proper fulfilment of the amplifying military obligations of such peace pacts. If it is possible that wars may arise out of non-aggression pacts, it is just as possible that out of defensive mutual assistance pacts there may come offensive acts of aggression. Now, to the German Government the distance from a pact of non-aggression and a no-force pact to a forcible breach of the peace seems further than the distance from military obligations of a defensive character to a military policy of an offensive character. The German Government now, as before, sees in this development of military alliances in Europe no element of collective peaceful development or, indeed, of any guarantee of peace. It is therefore not in a position to sign pacts in which such obligations are an integral part, whether they apply to all or only individual contracting parties.

Nevertheless the German Government would not be deterred from joining non-aggression pacts on the lines of her proposal merely because other members chose to enter into mutual assistance pacts with one another; but the two arrangements should be kept separate and not be embodied in the same document. The reply from which these extracts are taken was to be issued to the German press on the 14th April. This reply satisfied the French Government that

they could make with Russia a bi-lateral treaty of mutual assistance without compromising the negotiations for a multi-lateral pact of non-aggression.

These latest exchanges took place whilst the heads of the French, British, and Italian Governments, accompanied by their Foreign Ministers, were assembled at Stresa in consultation over the situation created by Germany's designs on the independence of Austria and her repudiation of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles on the 16th March. Immediately after Stresa, and in the same connection, a special session of the League Council took place, at which Germany was convicted of a breach of the Treaty of Versailles.

At Stresa no word was said about Ethiopia, and at the League Council the decision was taken to postpone the Ethiopian question until the next regular session towards the end of May. The only possible inference is that up to this stage France and the United Kingdom were acquiescing in Italy's aggression against Ethiopia, and that they were doing so in order, as they hoped, to consolidate the Stresa Front against Germany. A further and equally irresistible inference is that it was in pursuit of this policy of the three Powers that the Council was led to refrain in the early stages of the dispute from the action which was its obvious duty. We have just seen that France and the United Kingdom were proposing in the Eastern Pact to legalize the practice of lobbying in connection with the League's proceedings, and the stifling of League action in the matter of Ethiopia was clearly of this nature.

The failure of League action in the case of Ethiopia is commonly attributed to the difficulty of applying Article 16. Actually, however, the failure was due to the Council's refusal to apply Article 11, which was invoked by the victim



in January, and Article 15 which was invoked in March. The fate of Ethiopia was settled in the spring of 1935, long before there could be any question of sanctions, and in the light of events in Europe it seems to be beyond all doubt that her territory and the blood of her people were the price demanded by Italy and granted by France and the United Kingdom to cement their union against Germany.

On the 2nd May, 1935, the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Agreement was signed. As already noted (p. 81) it refers to the League of Nations in every Article; and the preamble states that its main object is to ensure the effective application of the Covenant of the League. The attendant circumstances, however, make it impossible to regard it otherwise than as directed against Germany, however it might be worded. It is reproduced as Appendix V.

On the 3rd May Sir John Simon, in talk with the German Ambassador, urged that Herr Hitler should formulate proposals in more detail for a multi-lateral non-aggression pact on the lines suggested by him on the 26th March, when Sir John Simon was in Berlin. He pointed out that "by positive and concrete action of this sort Germany would do a great deal more to show that she was contributing something to security than by merely putting herself on record in vague phrases." The Ambassador also spoke of the proposed Air Pact, deploring its postponement, and saying that France was at first in favour of it, but had lost all interest in it on learning that Germany also favoured it, a version which Sir John Simon disputed. Sir John Simon said that German suggestions as to the form of the pact would be welcome. There had so far been no discussions as to bi-lateral agreements, but these might be necessary to supplement the multi-lateral agreement, in view of the fact that the Air Pact provided for instantaneous action. That, how-

ever, was a question to be considered when they all got down to drafting the pact together. The German Ambassador expressed the view that it was, in fact, impossible for A. to have a bi-lateral agreement with B. as to the way in which obligations would be fulfilled against C. and at the same time to have an agreement with C. as to how reciprocal obligations would be fulfilled against B. The difficulty here lay, of course, in the fact that military information would have to be exchanged.

This topic was resumed a week later, when the German Ambassador said that it was difficult for Germany to draft a multi-lateral pact, in view of the fact that the Franco-Soviet Pact was clearly aimed at Germany, as was shown by the wording of the protocol. He said that the German Government were now studying this Pact in relation to the Locarno Treaty to see whether they were consistent with one another. The Ambassador thought they were not. As regarded the air pact the Ambassador and the Foreign Secretary repeated their remarks of the previous week, i.e., the former deplored the delay and the latter invited Germany to make the next move.

## CHAPTER XII

### TOWARDS REPUDIATION

ON the 21st May, 1935, Herr Hitler made a speech of thirteen numbered points, of which the following is an attempted condensation.

1. The German Government rejects the judgment of Geneva, and counter-claims that it was the victorious Powers who had infringed the Treaty of Versailles by their failure to disarm. The point is made that the Treaty divides the nations into victors and vanquished ; whilst it should be built on the equality of status of all its members.

2. The German Government will respect other features of the treaty, including the territorial provisions, and will only carry out by peaceable understandings such future revisions as will be necessary.

3. The German Government will not sign any treaty which seems incapable of fulfilment, but will scrupulously observe any treaty voluntarily signed by them or their predecessors. In particular they will observe Locarno, if others do the same. They "regard the respecting of the demilitarized zones as an extremely difficult contribution for a sovereign State to make to the appeasement of Europe," and comment on the increase of troops on the other side.

4. The German Government will take part in a system of collective co-operation in Europe, but consider that there should be scope for the revision of treaties.

5. The German Government believe that European co-operation cannot be brought about by conditions

which have been forced upon one party. They believe that co-operation may be achieved step by step, provided unattainable demands are not pressed.

6. The German Government are ready to make non-aggression pacts with their neighbours, and to supplement these by provisions to isolate combatants and localize war-makers. In particular they will obey restrictions on the supply of arms and materials which are respected by others.

7. They are ready to agree to an air convention to supplement the Locarno Pact.

8. They have made known the size of their army, and will adhere to this. They are prepared to limit their armaments to the extent that others do the same. They will accept air parity with other Western Great Powers. They will limit their naval tonnage to thirty-five per cent of the British figure, and this leaves them fifteen per cent below France's figure. They do not intend to take part in any naval rivalry. They recognize the vital importance and the justification of naval power to Britain, just as for themselves they are determined to protect themselves on land.

9. They are prepared to take an active part in endeavours to limit armaments, and suggest that progress might be sought along the lines of the former Geneva Convention, outlawing certain methods of warfare. "Among such weapons they include those which are primarily designed less to bring death and destruction to the fighting soldiers than to the women and children. . . ." In short, they would seek qualitative disarmament on humanitarian grounds.

10. They would agree to any limitation leading to the abolition of the heavy weapons used primarily for

offence. France's powerful fortifications would then become impregnable.

11. Germany declares herself ready to agree to any limitation of the calibre of guns, battleships, cruisers, and torpedo-boats, to any international limitation of naval tonnage, and even the entire abolition of submarines.

12. They believe that attempts to achieve appeasement will fail unless restraint be placed on the poisoning of public opinion in speech and writing, on the film and in the theatre.

13. They are ready to agree to international arrangements which will effectively prevent interference from outside in the affairs of other States. They stress the need for an international definition of the term "interference."

Sir John Simon on the 23rd May instructed the British Ambassador at Berlin, if he felt able to make the necessary inquiries, to ask for further elucidation on four points.

On point 1. What condition of equality would permit Germany's return to the League, and what was meant by the expression "this equality of rights must be extended to all functions and all rights to possessions in international life"?

On point 2. Does the German Government refer only to the war guilt clauses, or does the expression "moral and practical discrimination" refer also to the questions of the demilitarized zone, or mandates, or International Rivers, or Austria?

What does Herr Hitler propose to do in order to give effect to his offer to conclude non-aggression pacts communicated during the Stresa Conference? Is he prepared to open negotiations at once? (This query covers points 3 to 7.)

On point 8. What is meant by the statement that tl

German Government "have made known the construction of the new German army," and that "under no circumstances will they depart from this"? This seems inconsistent with what follows, namely that they "are prepared at any time to limit their armaments to any extent which is equally adopted by other States."

In putting these queries the British Ambassador was instructed to "take care not to present them as though the only reaction of His Majesty's Government to the Chancellor's speech was to be critical." This instruction may well have placed the Ambassador in a quandary, seeing that Sir John Simon's telegram had in fact conveyed no hint of any other reaction on the part of His Majesty's Government, not even a welcome for the humanitarian view put forward in point 9.

On the 29th May the German Ambassador in London communicated to Sir John Simon a memorandum on the relationship between the Locarno Treaty and the Franco-Soviet Pact, embodying the results of the study which had been mentioned in the conversations of 10th May (see p. 127). The German Government consider that the protocol attached to the new Pact is inconsistent with the former treaty. The Pact purports to be based on the League, but the protocol provides for independent action by the signatories, in case of unprovoked aggression, if for any reason the League fails to act. Thus, the memorandum points out, in the event, for example, of a German-Soviet conflict, France claims the right to decide unilaterally who is the aggressor, and, in virtue of that decision, to attack Germany. This is inconsistent with the Locarno Treaty, the basis of which is the mutual declaration that France and Germany will not attack one another. The German Government therefore communicate this view to the other Powers

signatories of the Locarno Treaty, with the hope "that all the signatory Powers will agree with them in recognizing that the provisions of the Treaty of Locarno cannot legally be modified or interpreted by the fact that a treaty has been concluded with a third party by one of the signatories."

On the same day, and in response to Sir John Simon's request of the 3rd May (p. 126 *ante*), the German Ambassador handed in a draft embodying the German Government's suggestions as to the form of an Air Pact between the Locarno Powers. The Ambassador said that the draft was being placed in our hands, as it was we who had originated the proposal and had invited the German view, and the other Powers were so informed. If we wished to do so we could supply them with copies, but in that event the German Government would wish to be supplied with any alternative drafts emanating from them. Sir John Simon deprecated this procedure which might convey the impression that we were in receipt of special confidences, and suggested that the German Government should themselves supply copies to those concerned. The German Ambassador replied that the German Government believed that the French Government had prepared a draft, a copy of which had been supplied to us but not to them. Sir John Simon said that our object, and theirs, was to come to an agreement, and that the best course was for the German proposal to be put before all the Powers concerned. The German Ambassador, without changing his ground, said that he would report to his Government.

The German draft is not in the print, and its subsequent history is mentioned as follows in a despatch of the 26th March, 1936, from Mr. Eden to the British Ambassador at Berlin :—

The German Government said that this draft might be communicated to the other Locarno Powers; and subsequently, on the 9th July, 1935, Herr von Hoesh suggested that there should be circulated in one document to all five Powers the German and British and French drafts, which he understood existed. On the 23rd July the German Embassy was informed orally that it was thought that it would only complicate the situation to circulate drafts at that stage. It would be better to agree first on general principles and then to try to secure a common draft. Such preliminary drafts as had been prepared were therefore never circulated or discussed, and it is felt that no useful purpose would be served by making them public now.

On the 31st May a reply was received from Berlin to Sir John Simon's queries of the 23rd (p. 130). The German view had already been proclaimed more exhaustively than that of other Governments concerned, and the Chancellor felt that he could not reasonably be expected to say more, whilst others reserved their attitude. The answers to the specific queries brought out no new points.

On the 3rd June the French Government addressed a note to the German Government with reference to the latter's suggestions for an Eastern Pact, handed to Sir John Simon at Berlin on 26th March (p. 123) and amplified by Herr von Neurath on the 12th April (p. 123) whilst the Stresa Conference was in progress. The French Government fully appreciated the value of the suggestions, and subject to certain reservations to be elucidated in due course, considered that the German suggestions might profitably serve as a basis for negotiations.

At this point it is necessary to turn for a moment to the Ethiopian question. It was the League Council Meeting



towards the end of May 1935 which first took any real cognisance of the dispute, and it was the British representative who insisted that a policy of inaction could no longer be maintained. The indignation so caused in Italian circles was the starting point of antagonism between Italy and the United Kingdom. At the beginning of June the mobilization of three additional Italian divisions was made the occasion of Italian press rebukes to the British press and public; and from that time onward the breach continued to widen. Thus we must observe that by the time France had decided to respond to the German overture of March, the so-called Stresa Front had begun to crumble, and the guarantors of Locarno to part company.

On the 25th June the British Ambassador in Paris was given a copy of the French reply to the German memorandum of the 29th May (p. 131) regarding the Franco-Soviet Pact. This contests the German view that the Franco-Soviet Pact conflicted with the Locarno Treaty. No useful purpose would be served by attempting to follow the legalistic arguments of this document, which make an intricate play with the provisions of the Pact and the Protocol, in relation to and in contradistinction with the provisions of the Locarno Treaty and the Covenant of the League. In ordinary life such hair-splitting arguments might provide material for interminable law-suits. As a contribution to international order and appeasement, a document which contained so much argument can have possessed little practical value.

Apart from arguments based on verbal subtleties the chief French argument was that they would obviously not have entered into any arrangement "which might, even indirectly, invalidate in the slightest degree the Treaty of Locarno or the rights and obligations of the guarantor Powers." This reminder to Germany of the existence of

guarantor Powers was deprived of whatever minatory effect it might once have possessed by the fact that the two Powers in question, Italy and the United Kingdom, had begun to part company on the Ethiopian question. Similarly the French Government's protestations of loyalty to the League of Nations had become more unconvincing in view of the Franco-Italian compact of January regarding Ethiopia. The French reply was shortly followed by communications, in which, in terms showing joint action, the British, Italian, and Belgian Governments concurred in the French view. The reply of the German Government was handed to Sir Samuel Hoare<sup>1</sup> by the German Ambassador in London on the 1st August:—

. . . . .

The German Government can, however, not agree with the juridical point of view exposed in the French Memorandum and endorsed by the other three Governments. They do not think, however, that any useful purpose would be served by the continuation of an exchange of juridical memoranda, and hold the opinion that there will be sufficient opportunity for the necessary further discussions in the framework of the other pending negotiations.

A phase of ineffectual communications ensued between London and the Embassy in Berlin, in which Sir Samuel Hoare's efforts to persuade Berlin to get on with the Eastern Pact and the Western Air Pact met with the response on the 22nd August that "holiday season was by tradition more completely observed in Germany than in England." The fact was that Sir Samuel Hoare was kept busy in London by the Italo-Ethiopian imbroglio, whilst his opposite number in

<sup>1</sup> Sir Samuel Hoare had succeeded Sir John Simon as Foreign Secretary on the 7th June.

Germany was on holiday. If it is permissible to see a gleam of humour in this dreary narrative of frustration, one may perhaps think that Berlin was poking a little quiet fun at London.

In the middle of October Germany's withdrawal from the League became definite, the prescribed period of two years having elapsed since her announcement of withdrawal. The German Government accepted the British and French view that Germany's withdrawal from the League did not invalidate the Treaty of Locarno. The possibility that the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, by this time well under way, might invalidate the League itself is naturally enough not mentioned. But the shock to international order arising from this event must by now have become a major factor in Germany's attitude to her European associates. The fading out of all activity in the matter of the Pacts to which a short time before so much importance had been attached, was not limited to the holiday season.

In November and December both the British and French Governments were inviting the German Government to resume conversations relative to the Western Air Pact, which had been suggested in February (p. 121). Herr Hitler was still dissatisfied about the Franco-Soviet Treaty, and moreover, as he informed the French Ambassador in Berlin early in December, was now unwilling to negotiate at all pending a settlement of the Ethiopian question. By the middle of January he had come round to a readiness in principle to discuss the pact round a table with the other Locarno Powers. He did not exclude bi-lateral agreements, but these should be discussed in conference, and not *à deux*. But he considered that the moment was inopportune "owing to the strained relations between Italy and Great Britain, the two guarantor Powers of Locarno."

In February German press criticism of this country became the subject of a talk between the German Embassy in London and the Foreign Office. Remarks on our side regarding the German press were countered by the statement that our press had applauded the Franco-Soviet Pact. On the 21st a press communiqué was issued in Berlin explaining the German view of the Franco-Soviet Pact on the lines of Herr Hitler's communication to the Locarno Powers (p. 131), and rebutting a French statement that Germany had at first approved this pact, and had afterwards changed her mind.

Two years had now passed since the issue in January 1934 of the declarations of the British, French, German, and Italian Governments on the question which was still officially called "disarmament" but which had in reality become the question of Germany's right to rearm in view of her neighbours' failure to disarm. This question had not advanced a single inch beyond the stage described in the Italian memorandum as "academic declarations and counter-declarations, of discussions and of recriminations." The German contributions had been at least as sensible and constructive as any put forward during this phase of discussion, and the charge of delinquency cannot justly lie against Germany alone for these unfruitful years.

## CHAPTER XIII

### REPUDIATION AND AFTER

ON the 28th February, 1936, the *Paris-Midi* published an interview given by Herr Hitler to M. Bertrand de Jouvenal. The date of this interview is not specifically stated, but it is to be inferred from what ensued that the date was the 17th February. The substance of this in translation is given in the Blue Book, and is here reproduced.

Herr Hitler said: "Is it not plainly to the advantage of both of our countries to keep on good terms? Would it not be disastrous for them to meet again on the field of battle? It is only logical that I should wish for that which is most advantageous to my country, and can anything be of more advantage to my country than peace? . . . Class war is an absurdity; I have shown that it is an absurdity, and the people have understood me. I have made an appeal to reason, and the German people have heard me. Now I make an appeal to reason in the international sphere just as I have made an appeal to reason in the social sphere. I wish to show my people that the notion of hostility between France and Germany is absurd, and that our people are in no way hereditary enemies. The German people understand this. They have followed me in the far more difficult task of reconciliation between Germany and Poland. In France the German-Polish Agreement has been interpreted as an act of diplomatic virtuosity on my part. This is a compliment which does not please me and which I have not deserved. The facts of the matter are that tension

between Germany and Poland could not be allowed to continue. It was unhealthy and enervating. It was only logical that I should seek to put an end to it. I have succeeded, and the whole of the German people are relieved. And now I wish to succeed in achieving a *détente* with France. It is wrong that our two peoples should waste their strength in pointless hatred. . . ."

"It is extraordinary that you should still consider German aggression possible. Do you not read our newspapers? Have you not noticed that the German press has systematically abstained from any attack against France, and that it never mentions France unsympathetically? Do you think that, if I wished to be able to launch an attack against your nation, I should see that nothing but good was spoken of France? The views which in a few years' time I shall have impressed upon the German nation would be a great handicap to me if I should wish one day to make war on you. For war a psychological preparation is necessary."

In reply to questions about the Franco-Soviet Pact, Herr Hitler said: "My personal efforts to reach a *rapprochement* will not cease. Nevertheless, in actual fact, this more than deplorable pact would naturally create a new situation. . . . France is allowing herself to be caught in the diplomatic web of a Power whose only aim is to create in all the great European States a disorder from which she will benefit. You must not forget that Soviet Russia is a political element which has at its disposal an explosive revolutionary idea and gigantic armaments. As a German, it is, indeed, my duty to take account of such a situation. . . ."

"You would do well to reflect seriously on my efforts to secure an *entente*. No German leader has ever made

you such overtures, and such frequent overtures. From whom do these offers emanate? From a pacifist charlatan who has made international relations his speciality? No, indeed, but from the greatest nationalist that Germany has ever had to lead her. I offer you something which no one else has ever been able to offer you. An *entente* which will be approved by ninety per cent of the German nation, the ninety per cent which follows me. Do reflect seriously on this: there are in the life of nations certain decisive moments. To-day France can, if she wishes, put an end for ever to the 'German peril' which your children, from generation to generation, learn to fear. You can cancel the fearful mortgage which weighs upon the history of France. This chance is offered to you; if you do not take it, think of your responsibility to your children. You have before you a Germany ninety per cent of whose population has full confidence in its leader, and this leader says to you: 'Let us be friends.' "

The French Ambassador was at once instructed to call on Herr Hitler and ask what the French Government were to understand to be the meaning of this interview. Were these just general expressions of opinion, or had he any definite proposals. If so the French Government would be glad to know what they were. Herr Hitler said that he had given the interview ten days before ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact. It had been published the day after ratification, and the *fait accompli* had changed the whole situation. The Ambassador pointed out that a deplorable impression would be created by failure to implement offers of friendship made in press interviews; and somewhat reluctantly—so the account reads—the Chancellor agreed to make proposals.

Presumably Herr Hitler meant his address to be published in time to prevent the Franco-Soviet Pact from being ratified. There is no explanation given of the delay of eleven days.

On the 6th March Mr. Eden held an important talk with the German Ambassador in London, in which he urged a resumption of discussions on the Air Pact, in spite of the difficulties arising out of the Italo-Ethiopian war. He pointed to the mounting expenditure on arms, and the growing fear of war amongst the peoples of Europe, and, after putting forward some practical questions which would call for solution through diplomatic channels, expressed the earnest hope that practical expression might now be given to sentiments so often expressed in speeches. The Ambassador undertook to transmit this overture to his Government. Before leaving he mentioned that a special messenger was *en route* from Berlin with an important declaration from the Chancellor, and asked for an interview the following day to deliver it.

This declaration argues that the Franco-Soviet Pact is a fresh military alliance against Germany, and that by entering into it France had destroyed the Locarno Treaty. This military alliance was supplemented by a Treaty of Alliance between Russia and Czechoslovakia in parallel terms. In the circumstances Germany considered that France had dissolved the Locarno Treaty. Therefore :—

In accordance with the fundamental right of a nation to secure its frontiers and ensure its possibilities of defence, the German Government have to-day restored the full and unrestricted sovereignty of Germany in the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland.

After making this announcement of the military reoccupation of the Rhineland the declaration continues as follows :—



In order, however, to avoid any misinterpretation of their intentions and to establish beyond doubt the purely defensive character of these measures, as well as to express their unchangeable longing for a real pacification of Europe between States which are equals in rights and equally respected, the German Government declare themselves ready to conclude new agreements for the creation of a system of peaceful security for Europe on the basis of the following proposals :

(1) The German Government declare themselves ready to enter at once into negotiations with France and Belgium with regard to the creation of a zone demilitarized on both sides, and to give their agreement in advance to any suggestion regarding the depth and nature thereof on the basis of full parity.

(2) The German Government propose, for the purpose of ensuring the sanctity and inviolability of the boundaries in the West, the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Germany, France, and Belgium, the duration of which they are ready to fix at twenty-five years.

(3) The German Government desire to invite Great Britain and Italy to sign this treaty as guarantor Powers.

(4) The German Government agree, in case the Netherlands Government should so desire and the other contracting parties consider it appropriate, to bring the Netherlands into this treaty system.

(5) The German Government are prepared, in order to strengthen further these security agreements between the Western Powers, to conclude an air pact calculated to prevent in an automatic and effective manner the danger of sudden air attacks.

(6) The German Government repeat their offer to conclude with the States bordering Germany in the East

non-aggression pacts similar to that with Poland. As the Lithuanian Government have in the last few months corrected their attitude towards the Memel Territory to a certain extent, the German Government withdraw the exception which they once made regarding Lithuania and declare their readiness, on condition that the guaranteed autonomy of the Memel Territory is effectively developed, to sign a non-aggression pact of this nature with Lithuania also.

(7) Now that Germany's equality of rights and the restoration of her full sovereignty over the entire territory of the German Reich have finally been attained, the German Government consider the chief reason for their withdrawal from the League of Nations to be removed. They are therefore willing to re-enter the League of Nations. In this connection they express the expectation that in the course of a reasonable period the question of colonial equality of rights and that of the separation of the League Covenant from its Versailles setting may be clarified through friendly negotiations.

On the 19th March the other Locarno Powers issued a "Text of Proposals" from the preamble to which an extract has already been given (p. 83). The document, Cmd. 5134, charged Germany with infringing the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Locarno, and declared that nothing which had happened could be considered as having freed the signatories of the latter Treaty from their obligations or guarantees. Their General Staffs were to be instructed to confer regarding the means of implementing these obligations. Germany was invited to lay before the Permanent Court of International Justice the question whether the Franco-Soviet Pact conflicted with the Treaty of Locarno, and meanwhile to refrain from any further

militarization of the Rhineland. The French and Belgian Governments agreed to suspend despatch of troops to the frontier. A composite force, including detachments of the guarantor Powers, was to be organized for security purposes on the frontier.

It was desired that the German Government should take part in negotiations in regard to proposals 2 to 5 of the German memorandum of the 7th March, the status of the Rhineland, and mutual assistance pacts open to all signatories of the Treaty of Locarno. The League was to be moved to convene an international conference to examine :—

(1) Agreements relating to the system of collective security, and paying attention to the mode of application of Article 16 of the Covenant.

(2) Agreements tending to assure the effective limitation of armaments.

(3) International arrangements having as their object the extension of economic relations and of international commerce.

(4) Proposals 6 and 7 of the German memorandum of the 7th March.

Draft resolutions were submitted for presentation to the Council of the League, whereby the Council would endorse the judgement of the Locarno Powers opposed in this question to Germany. Finally the guarantor Powers, the United Kingdom and Italy, were to address letters to France and Belgium assuring them of full support, and mentioning contact between the General Staffs.

On the 24th March the German Government made a provisional reply, promising a fuller statement a week later (Cmd. 5175). The note of the 24th March made the points briefly summarized as follows :—

1. The German Government being convinced that the Franco-Soviet Pact had dissolved the Locarno Treaty had determined to resume full sovereignty over all German territory. This was done to place Germany on terms of equality with other nations, and without such equality no reasonable organization of peace in Europe was possible.

2. If other States are ready to seek the way to a new peace they cannot reject the elementary principles that a peace to be lasting must be made between equals. Any attempt to introduce a new system of order in Europe by the old methods of a hate-inspired division of the nations into those with more and those with less rights, into defamed and honourable nations, or even into dictator nations and subject nations, must lead to the same result, . . . i.e. the new order will be no better than the old.

3. The proposals which had been handed to them were quite unacceptable, as they imposed a new and intolerable discrimination against Germany. If they were to accept these "they would share the responsibility for its inevitable results, a continued inner rejection of the humiliating subjection imposed upon the German people under such conditions." . . . "The German Government must therefore reject all the provisions of the proposals of the Locarno Powers which are liable once more to infringe the honour of the nation or to bring into question or do away with its equality of rights."

4. "The German Government and the German people have the most profound and earnest desire to make an important contribution to the peace of Europe after the restoration of the complete independence and sovereignty of the Reich. . . . If, therefore, they are compelled to reject the proposal for a draft treaty presented to them

by the Locarno Powers in all those points which affect the honour and equal rights of the German nation, they believe, nevertheless, recognizing their co-responsibility for the fate of the European peoples, that they must comply with the suggestions of His Britannic Majesty's Government in order for their part, by presenting any possible new proposals, to contribute to a solution of this European question. For this reason the German Government do not wish in this document to go into the details of the points rejected by them, but they would like to reserve this procedure in order to bring this rejection of theirs into connection with a new and detailed proposal for overcoming the European crisis, which they are determined to work out. They will present this to His Britannic Majesty's Government with the sincere wish that the latter may then succeed in finding in it a basis for starting those negotiations which shall bring peace to the European peoples and fructify anew their economic and social life. . . . The German Government will then present to His Britannic Majesty's Government their carefully considered attitude and their positive proposals on Tuesday, the 31st March."

The promise was duly fulfilled in a communication headed "Peace Plan of the German Government of March 31, 1936, communicated by Ambassador von Ribbentrop on April 1, 1936." This memorandum presents the German case with clarity and emphasis, and is not lacking in constructive suggestions for European appeasement. With other documents ensuing upon the German reoccupation of the Rhineland it is contained in the White Paper Cmd. 5175 and is worth reading in full. It will here be abbreviated by extract, rather than by condensation or paraphrase:

(Translation)

It was with hearty approval that the German Government learnt from Ambassador von Ribbentrop that it is the wish of the British Government and the British people to begin as soon as possible the practical work for a real pacification of Europe. This desire is in full accord with the innermost intentions and hopes of the German people and their Government. The German Government therefore regret all the more that they are unable to recognize in the draft submitted to them by the representatives of the Locarno Powers on the 20th March a serviceable and fruitful basis for the initiation and carrying out of such a genuine work of peace. In the eyes of the German people and of their Government, this draft lacks that spirit of understanding of the laws of honour and equality of status which at all times in the life of peoples constitutes the primary condition for the conclusion of free, and thus sacred, treaties.

2. The German Government believe that they owe it to the sacred gravity of the task with which they are faced to limit to the most essential points their statement of the negative aspects of the memorandum presented to them. They will, however, endeavour, by amplifying and clarifying the proposals made by them on the 7th March, to facilitate the beginning of concrete work to secure European peace.

3. In order to explain their rejection of certain discriminatory points and to make clear the basis of their constructive proposals, the German Government feel impelled to make the following statement of principle :

4. The German Government have just received from the German people, among other things, a solemn general mandate to represent the Reich and the German nation in

accordance with the following two lines of policy :

(1) The German people are determined to preserve under all circumstances their freedom, their independence, and at the same time their equality of status. They regard the upholding of these natural principles of international comity as a precept of national honour and a necessary condition for any practical co-operation between nations, from which they will in no circumstances deviate any further.

(2) The German people most earnestly desire to co-operate with all their might in the great work of general reconciliation and understanding of the nations of Europe, for the purpose of safeguarding peace which is so necessary for the culture and welfare of this continent.

5. These are the wishes of the German people and therefore the duty of the German Government.

6. The German Government further wish to make the following observations in pursuance of the attitude adopted by them in principle, as set forth in their provisional communication of the 24th March, 1936 :—

(a) In the year 1918 Germany concluded the armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points of President Wilson. These did not contemplate any limitation of German sovereignty in the Rhineland. On the contrary, the main idea on which these Points were based was the establishment of a better, and a permanent, peace through the creation of a new international order. That conception was intended to do the fullest justice to the principle of self-determination without regard to victor or vanquished.

The next few paragraphs are legalistic or recriminatory, and bring out no new point of special importance.

9. The German Government, in their provisional communication of the 24th March, 1936, called attention to the fact that the military treaty concluded by France with Soviet Russia had deprived the Locarno Treaty of its legal and, in particular, of its political basis and thus of the conditions for its existence. It is superfluous to go into details in this matter again because there is no doubt that the tendency to involve Europe in a network of military alliances is contrary to the spirit and the idea of the establishment of a real community of nations. There is a great and growing danger that out of this general entanglement in military alliances a situation will arise similar to that to which, amongst other principal causes, the world owed the outbreak of its most frightful and most senseless war.

. . . . .

12. The German Government are not in a position to submit the measure which they have adopted for the security of the Reich, and which *involves only German territory*, and is a menace to no one, to the judgment of a body which, at best, is only in a position to judge the legal aspect of the question, but not in any circumstances whatever its political aspects. This is all the more true, since the Council of the League of Nations have already reached a decision which prejudices the legal judgment of the question.

. . . . .

15. The German Government, therefore, on this point, as well as on the others contained in the draft proposal of the representatives of the Locarno Powers which can only be regarded as unilaterally onerous to Germany, not only can see no useful contribution to a really broad



and constructive solution of the question of European security, but only points of discrimination against a great nation, which thus make questionable the establishment of any permanent peace.

16. In accordance with the mission entrusted to them by the German people, the German Government must consequently decline all proposals in the draft which impose one-sided burdens on Germany and therefore discriminate against her.

19. The German Government are further of the opinion that to arrive at an easier solution of the present complex of problems, these should be appropriately divided up according to the aims in view. They must accordingly put the following fundamental questions of principle :—

To what goal shall European diplomacy direct its efforts?

(a) Is this goal to be the maintenance and continuation, in whatever new forms and with whatever modifications, of that splitting of the nations of Europe into two camps, into those with more, and those with less, rights, into honourable and dishonourable, free and fettered, which had shown itself so unsuitable for ensuring any lasting peace?

Is it, moreover, the endeavour of European diplomacy to adopt this view and reach conclusions regarding past events by means of mere majority decisions; and thus to seek for the continuance of this former state of affairs a legal justification which is apparently still lacking? Or—

(b) Shall the efforts of the Governments of Europe be directed to achieving, come what may, a really constructive reorganization of the relations of the nations of

Europe with one another and to attaining a sure and permanent peace?

20. The German Government owe it to their people to declare plainly that they will only take part in the second of these endeavours, which, in their opinion, is the only constructive one. Moreover, they make this declaration with the profoundest possible conviction and with the whole weight of the people's sincere will and longing behind them.

21. The German Government believe, then, that the task confronting the statesmen of Europe should be divided into three parts as follows :—

(a) A period (during which the atmosphere would gradually be calming down) for elucidating the procedure for the negotiations to be initiated.

(b) A period of actual negotiations for securing the peace of Europe.

(c) A later period for dealing with such supplementary aspects of the European peace settlement as are desirable, and the content and scope of which cannot or should not be precisely laid down or defined in advance (disarmament, economic questions, etc.).

22. To this end the German Government propose the following peace plan :—

(1) In order to give to the future agreements to ensure the peace of Europe the character of inviolable treaties, the nations participating in them shall do so only on a footing of absolute equality and equal respect. The only compelling reason for signing these treaties must lie in their generally recognized and obvious suitability for ensuring the peace of Europe, and thus the social happiness and economic prosperity of the nations.

(2) In order to shorten, as far as possible, the period

of uncertainty (in the economic interests of the European nations) the German Government propose a limit of four months for the first period until the signature of the proposed non-aggression pacts, and the consequent guaranteeing of European peace.

(3) The German Government give the assurance that they will not proceed to any reinforcement whatsoever of the troops in the Rhineland during this period, always provided that the Belgian and French Governments act similarly.

(4) The German Government give the assurance that they will not, during this period, move the troops in the Rhineland closer to the Belgian and French frontiers.

(5) The German Government propose to set up a commission composed of representatives of the two guarantor Powers, England and Italy, and of a disinterested third neutral Power, to guarantee the execution of these reciprocal assurances.

(6) Germany, Belgium, and France shall each be entitled to send a representative to this commission. If Germany, Belgium, and France think, for any particular reason, that they can point to a change in the military situation within this period of four months, they have the right to communicate what they have observed to the Guarantee Commission.

(7) Germany, Belgium, and France declare their willingness, in such a case, to permit the Commission to make the necessary investigations, through the British and Italian Military Attachés, and to report thereon to the participating Powers.

(8) Germany, Belgium, and France give the assurance that they will take fully into consideration the objections arising therefrom,

(9) Moreover, the German Government are willing, on the basis of complete reciprocity, to agree with their two Western neighbours to any military limitations on the German Western frontier.

(10) Germany, Belgium, and France and the two guarantor Powers shall agree, at once or at the latest after the French elections, to enter into discussions, under the leadership of the British Government, for the conclusion of a twenty-five years' non-aggression pact or security pact between France and Belgium on the one hand, and Germany on the other.

(11) Germany agrees that England and Italy shall once again sign this security pact as guarantor Powers.

(12) Should special obligations to render military assistance arise out of these security agreements, Germany for her part declares her willingness to assume such obligations also.

(13) The German Government hereby repeat their proposal for the conclusion of an air pact to supplement and reinforce these security agreements.

(14) The German Government repeat that, should the Netherlands so desire, they are willing to include this country also in the proposed Western European security agreement.

(15) In order to give to this covenant of peace, voluntarily entered into between Germany, on the one hand, and France, on the other, the character of a reconciliation and of a settlement of their centuries-old feud, Germany and France shall pledge themselves to take steps, in connection with the education of the young in both countries, and in publications, to avoid everything which might be calculated to poison the relationship between the two peoples, whether it be the adoption of a derogatory

or contemptuous attitude, or improper interference in the internal affairs of the other country. They shall agree to set up, at the headquarters of the League of Nations in Geneva, a joint commission whose function it shall be to submit to the two Governments, for their information and investigation, all complaints received.

(16) In pursuance of their intention to give this agreement the character of a sacred covenant, Germany and France shall undertake to ratify it by means of a plebiscite of the two peoples.

(17) Germany declares her willingness, for her part, to enter into communication with the States on her south-eastern and north-eastern frontiers, with a view to extending to them a direct invitation to conclude the non-aggression pacts proposed.

(18) Germany expresses her willingness to re-enter the League of Nations either at once or after the conclusion of these agreements. At the same time, the German Government again express their expectation that, within a reasonable time and by means of friendly negotiations, the question of colonial equality of rights as well as that of the separation of the Covenant of the League of Nations from its basis in the Treaty of Versailles setting will be cleared up.

(19) Germany proposes the constitution of an international court of arbitration, which shall have competence in respect of the observance of the various agreements concluded, and whose decisions shall be binding on all parties.

23. After the conclusion of this great work of securing European peace, the German Government consider it urgently necessary to endeavour by practical measures to

attempt to check unlimited competition in armaments. This they would regard not merely as an alleviation of the financial and economic position of the nations, but above all as leading to a psychological *détente*.

26. They consider that the task of most immediate importance is to impart to aerial warfare the moral and humane atmosphere of, and the protection afforded by, the Geneva Convention, as far as non-combatants or wounded are concerned. Just as the killing of defenceless wounded, or prisoners, or the use of dum-dum bullets, or the waging of submarine warfare without warning, have been regulated or forbidden by international conventions, so it must be possible for civilized humanity to prevent the senseless abuse of new types of weapons without running counter to the object for which war is waged.

27. The German Government therefore propose as the immediate practical objectives of these conferences :—

(1) The prohibition of the dropping of gas, poisonous, or incendiary bombs.

(2) The prohibition of dropping bombs of any kind whatsoever on open localities outside the range of the medium artillery of the fighting fronts.

(3) The prohibition of the bombardment with long-range guns of places more than twenty kilometres distant from the battle zone.

(4) The abolition and prohibition of the construction of tanks of the heaviest type.

(5) The abolition and prohibition of artillery of the heaviest calibre.

28. As and when possibilities of further limitation of armaments emerge from such discussions and agreements, attention shall be given to them.

29. The German Government hereby declare themselves prepared now to accede to every such arrangement, in so far as it is internationally valid.

30. The German Government believe that if only a first step is taken on the road to disarmament, this will have an enormous effect on the relations between nations, and consequently on the return of that atmosphere of confidence which is the prior condition for the development of trade and prosperity.

31. In order to meet the general desire for the restoration of favourable economic conditions, the German Government are therefore prepared, immediately after the conclusion of the political treaties, to enter into an exchange of views on economic problems with the other countries concerned, in the spirit of the proposals made, and to contribute as far as lies in their power to the improvement of the economic situation in Europe and of the world economic situation, which is inseparable from it.

32. The German Government believe that in the peace plan set forth above they have made their contribution to the creation of a new Europe on a basis of mutual respect and confidence between sovereign States. Many opportunities for such pacification of Europe, to which Germany has so often, in the last few years, offered to contribute, have been neglected. May this effort to achieve a European understanding at last succeed.

33. The German Government confidently believe that by submitting the peace plan outlined above they have paved the way to this goal.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MR. EDEN'S QUESTIONNAIRE

THE developments immediately ensuing upon receipt of this memorandum of the 31st March are not given in the White Paper, the next document printed being Mr. Eden's despatch of the 6th May to the British Ambassador at Berlin. It will be convenient in these circumstances to adhere to this sequence, and to return afterwards to the intervening period, merely noting here that the British rejoinder was the outcome of discussions with the Governments of France, Italy, and Belgium, and that Mr. Eden was acting as spokesman for the four Locarno Powers, a fact which does not emerge from the White Paper. It took the form of a series of queries and arguments relating to alleged obscurities and inconsistencies in the German communications of the 24th and 31st March. No useful purpose would be served by attempting to analyse all these in detail; and an examination of the first three queries and the last will suffice to indicate the nature of the response made to Herr Hitler's memorandum.

The first query was as follows:—

6. The first point on which it is desirable to be clear is whether Germany regards herself as now in a position to conclude "genuine treaties." There are passages in the second sub-paragraph of paragraph 1 of the German Government's memorandum of the 24th March, 1936, which seem to suggest that it is the view of the German Government that by their action in the Rhineland they have established this position. On the other hand, there



are passages in paragraph 2 of the memorandum of the 24th March which might be capable of different interpretation, which, however, His Majesty's Government would not themselves wish to draw. It is, of course, clear that negotiations for a treaty would be useless if one of the parties hereafter felt free to deny its obligation on the ground that that party was not at the time in a condition to conclude a binding treaty, and His Majesty's Government will welcome a clear declaration from the German Government to remove any uncertainty on this point.

The two paragraphs in question are as follows:—

1. The German Government, being convinced that by the Franco-Soviet military alliance the legal and political conditions on which the Rhine Pact of Locarno was based have been removed, have determined for their part to restore at last their full sovereignty over the entire territory of the Reich.

They did not, however, order the German troops to march into this territory of the German Reich in order to carry out a course of action for its own sake, but they considered this action necessary in order to provide for Germany the necessary conditions under which she could become a party to a new agreement for a clear and reasonable organization of peace in Europe. This condition will at all times only be found in the complete equality of the nations which join in such a common action.

Therefore this German action of restoring at last the full sovereignty of the Reich in its own territory cannot be separated from the agreements proposed by the German Government to the other nations for a general establishment of European peace.

2. If the other States and Governments are ready for their part also to seek the way leading to such a new

system for the establishment of peace in Europe, they cannot reject forthwith the elementary principles and the necessary conditions for such a development for the future. The following fact must be clear : Lasting agreements between the European nations with the aim of really guaranteeing peace can only be concluded in an atmosphere of sympathetic recognition and consideration of the natural equal vital and political rights of all the nations participating therein. Any attempt to introduce a new system of order in Europe by the old methods of a hate-inspired division of the nations into those with more and those with less rights, into defamed and honourable nations, must lead to the same result because it would be begun under the old conditions, which have proved themselves to be pernicious, i.e. the new order will be no better than the old.

It would be advantageous for future developments in Europe if all parties were to understand that treaties on the one hand, and dictates on the other, have a different legal value in the life of the nations. The dictate will probably appear to the victor to be its own legal justification, but will always be regarded by the vanquished as a violation contrary to all right, and be judged from this standpoint. Only treaties which have been concluded by parties with equal rights, and of their own free will and free conviction, can claim from both partners the same lasting and sacred respect.

By the restoration of her sovereignty in her own territory Germany has only created the necessary condition which will enable her to conclude such genuine treaties. For this purpose and on this condition the German Government for their part have presented their proposals, already made known, and still abide by them.

Now the reader must judge for himself as to the degree of obscurity in these paragraphs. To the present writer the ambiguity is hard to detect, and it seems clear enough that Herr Hitler did mean that he was prepared to negotiate a genuine treaty, but only as between equals, and that he considered that the necessary status of equality had been established by the reoccupation of the Rhineland. The implication in the last part of the British query that he might enter into a treaty and repudiate it afterwards was, to say the least of it, not polite; nor did it accord with common sense to invite him to give an assurance of his own good faith. Actually he had put forward in his paragraph 22, (16) of his second memorandum the unconventional and practical suggestion that an agreement between France and Germany—the crucial agreement—should be ratified by a plebiscite of the two peoples, a feature which would have given this agreement a sanctity quite unique amongst international documents. The British Government's first query seems therefore to have been neither necessary nor helpful.

The second point took the form of a disclaimer of agreement with the German view, expressed in paragraph 6 (p. 148), of which only a part has been reproduced, that the demilitarization of the Rhineland which had been imposed on Germany was inconsistent with the declarations of President Wilson, upon which the armistice of 1918 and the peace settlement of 1919 purported to be based. This was a point open to almost interminable argument on both sides, the one side contending with truth that the declarations of President Wilson (*vide* Appendix III) contemplated no abatement of German sovereignty in the Rhineland, the other side contending, with equal truth, that Germany had rejected the principles and proposals of President Wilson

as long as victory had appeared to be within her grasp. In May 1936 this was surely not an issue of first-rate importance which need have impeded discussions of a settlement.

The third query was as follows:—

There is in paragraph 4 (p. 147) of the memorandum of the 31st March a further cause for uncertainty. It is stated in that paragraph that "the German Government have received from the German people ('Volk') a solemn general mandate to represent the Reich and the German Nation ('Nation') to carry out a policy which implies the preservation under all circumstances of their freedom, their independence, and at the same time their equality of status." A distinction is apparently drawn between the Reich and the German Nation. The question is really whether Germany now considers that a point has been reached at which she can signify that she recognizes and intends to respect the existing territorial and political status of Europe, except in so far as this might be subsequently modified by free negotiation and agreement.

To any ordinary person the allusions in the quoted paragraph to the "Government," "People," "Reich," and "Nation" might appear to be no more than a rhetorical flourish, without any sinister significance worthy of mention in a State document issued on an important incident in European history. The final sentence in this query was *non sequitur* to the first part; and merely asked whether Germany accepted the position which had been assigned to her in Europe, "except in so far as this might be subsequently modified by free negotiation and agreement." As Germany had never been offered a status of equality in Europe, and as Herr Hitler had made it quite clear that he would accept nothing less, this question did not tend to

clarify the position as between Germany and the four Powers.

The last paragraph of the questionnaire was as follows :—

12. When Your Excellency sees the Chancellor, I request that you will discuss with him the points raised in this despatch and leave with him a copy. Your Excellency should explain that these are not exhaustive. There are other matters which will have to be raised at a later date; and before the return of Germany to the League of Nations comes under discussion, the German Government will no doubt think it desirable to give some definition of the phrase "the separation of the Covenant of the League of Nations from its basis in the Treaty of Versailles setting," which occurs in sub-paragraph 18 of paragraph 22. At the moment His Majesty's Government prefer only to deal with points the elucidation of which is essential prior to the opening of the general negotiations which, as stated above, they are sincerely desirous of promoting.

In this paragraph His Majesty's Government took the responsible step of saying that Germany's return to the League of Nations, and the continuance of general negotiations, were dependent on satisfactory answers by Germany to the questions which had been posed in this questionnaire.

It may well appear to the reader—as it certainly does to the present writer—that the German memoranda of the 24th and 31st March contained much that was reasonably stated and constructive in substance; and that they merited some response other than the cold blast of a querulous and not too tactfully worded questionnaire. The questions evoked no response from Herr Hitler, and it is not easy to see what kind of answer could have been expected, except of the nature described by Signor Mussolini in January

1934 (p. 112) as "academic declarations and counter-declarations, of discussions and recriminations which will not and cannot do anything to avoid," etc. Since this questionnaire the British Government have published no papers on a European settlement, and it would seem that from this time onwards Herr Hitler abandoned all attempts to appeal to reason, and decided to seek by force alone that which—so it may have seemed—was consistently denied to reason.

The first reactions in this country to Herr Hitler's memorandum were not on the lines of the questionnaire, but rather to treat the proposals in an objective and constructive manner. *The Times* in a leading article of the 2nd April wrote :—"Nothing in Herr Hitler's tone refuses discussion, and everything in his plan invites it." On the 9th it urged the need for the "abandonment of long-range dialectic, and the substitution of the more concentrated method of the round table." Lord Halifax said in the House of Lords on the 8th April :—"His Majesty's Government recognize the importance of many of the proposals that the German Government have made, and taken altogether they obviously constitute a body of material which must be carefully sifted and examined."

At an earlier stage, and just after the German move, Mr. Eden in the House of Commons on the 9th March assured France of British support in case of attack, but also said with reference to Herr Hitler's proposals on the 7th March (pp. 141-143) :—"His Majesty's Government will examine them clear sightedly and objectively with a view to finding out to what extent they represent the means by which the shaken structure of peace can again be strengthened. In the present grave condition of international affairs His Majesty's Government feel that no opportunity must be missed which offers any hope of amelioration."

On the same day Mr. Baldwin said :—" In Europe we have no more desire than to keep calm, to keep our heads, and to continue to try to bring France and Germany together in a friendship with ourselves." In a telegram to the German Government on the 17th March the British Government said :—" His Majesty's Government are doing and will continue to do their utmost to find a means of bringing about a peaceful and satisfactory settlement of the present difficulties." (*The Times*, 18th March, 1936.) These passages clearly show an attitude quite unlike that of the eventual response.

The momentous effect of this questionnaire in damping down the efforts to achieve a reasonable settlement is the justification for giving so much attention to it in these pages ; and we must now return to the proceedings which led to its issue. The French Government had received from the British Government a translation of Herr Hitler's memorandum of the 31st March. On the 8th April they communicated to the British, Italian, and Belgian Governments their observations drafted by M. Flandin on " a first study " of the German document, issuing it simultaneously to the press. The memorandum was in two parts, of which the first was a long and caustic criticism of the German document, the second part being the French counter-proposal for the establishment of peace in Europe. Two days later representatives of the four Powers met at Geneva, and discussed the situation with an awkward background presented firstly by Italian resentment of the British and French attitude on the Ethiopian question, and secondly by the fact that the French Government of M. Sarraut was getting into difficulties at home, and a general election was impending.

The outcome of this brief meeting was the decision to leave it to the British Government to return a non-committal

reply in the form of a questionnaire. Stated in different terms, the first part of the French memorandum became the questionnaire of the British Government. The hand was the hand of Eden, but the voice was the voice of Flandin.

The second part of the French memorandum took the form of "peace proposals" and was in two sections, the latter part dealing with economic questions. The first section is here reproduced in full :—

France, faithful to her tradition, asserts that she does not want to seek peace in securities for herself alone, in incomplete pacts, which allow war risks to remain.

Peace for all, peace total and lasting, peace with equality of rights, peace with confidence in the honour of all and with respect for the pledged word, a happy peace and a safe peace founded on international exchange which would succeed the mortal rivalry of economic nationalism, peace made real by a wide limitation of armaments leading to disarmament.

That is what the French Government proposes to other States in circumstances which, in spite of their gravity, appear to offer Europe a new possibility of union.

A small number of precise classified rules should enable all Governments who interpret the wishes of pacific peoples with good will to agree and to bear witness to common constructive views.

Collective security, mutual assistance, disarmament, economic co-operation, and European associations of resources for credit, of work, of intelligence, and the will of the peoples in favour of peace and against war, for prosperity and against misery—such are the broad lines of action for peace that the Government, sprung from the French people, offers in its name.

1. The first basis of international relations should be



the recognition of the equality of right and independence of all States, as well as the respect of contracted engagements.

2. There is no durable peace between nations if that peace remains subjected to the fluctuations, needs, and ambitions of each people.

3. There is no real security in international relations if all conflicts which can arise between States are not resolved according to international law, obligatory on all and interpreted by impartial and sovereign international jurisdiction, and guaranteed by the forces of all the associates of the international community.

4. Equality of rights does not prevent any State, voluntarily and in the common interest, limiting in certain circumstances the exercise of its sovereignty and rights.

5. This limitation is particularly necessary in the matter of armaments in order to avoid any danger of hegemony by a more powerful people over other weaker peoples.

6. The inequality in fact existing between peoples should be compensated within the international community by mutual assistance against any breaking of international law.

7. If mutual assistance in the general framework of the League is at present difficult to apply rapidly and efficaciously, it should be supplemented by regional agreements.

8. A typical regional unit is constituted by Europe, the development of which makes the organization of security on the above-defined bases easier.

9. Even were Europe, in the light of experience, to appear too vast a field for the application of collective security by mutual assistance and disarmament, there

would be room for organizing regional *ententes* within the European framework.

10. This organization should be confided to a European Commission formed within the framework of the League.

11. International law demands respect of treaties. No treaty should be regarded as unalterable, but no treaty can be repudiated unilaterally. In the new European organization, wherein all peoples with equal rights shall be freely associated, each State will bind itself to respect the territorial status of the members, which cannot be modified without the consent of all. No demand for modification shall be submitted for twenty-five years.

European or regional treaties concerning the independence of States, and all limitations of their sovereignty accepted by common accord, notably regarding armaments, shall be placed under the mutual guarantee of the associates.

To this end special disposition shall be made whereby, after observation by a competent international authority that the aforesaid treaties have been broken, sanctions, reaching as far as force, shall be taken with a view to the re-establishment of international law.

12. In order that they may be able to accomplish their duties of mutual assistance, the States associated with the European framework, or in the regional framework, shall specially provide and permanently maintain military, aerial, and naval forces at the disposal of the European Commission or the Council of the League of Nations.

13. The permanent control of the carrying-out of treaties within the European framework, or the regional framework, shall be organized by the European Commission. All the associated European States shall bind

themselves to make its work easy and to assure the execution of the decisions which this control might cause.

14. Collective security having been organized in the European or regional framework by mutual assistance, all the associates shall proceed to a wide measure of disarmament.

The limitation of armaments in each State shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of the European Commission or any other organ appointed by the Council of the League, with the reservation that each State may appeal to a high permanent Arbitration Court, formed for this purpose by the Council of the League, and which shall be charged to pay particular attention to the application of the principle mentioned above in paragraph 5.

15. All treaties existing at present in Europe, and those which may be concluded in the future between two or more members of the European community, shall be submitted to the European Commission, which shall be able to pronounce by a two-thirds majority that they are incompatible with the European pact or regional pact foreseen in paragraphs 8 and 9.

These dispositions shall apply to economic agreements as well as political ones.

The French proposals, as we see, consisted of a lecture on the sanctity of international agreements, which in view of the French attitude on the Ethiopian<sup>1</sup> affair was rather unconvincing ; and a proposal for an international police force whose only conceivable purpose was to keep Germany in subjection. It differed in no important particular from the attitude which France had maintained since 1918-19, and thus entirely failed to meet the new situation created by the resurgence of Germany from the subordinate position assigned to her at Versailles in 1919.

The effect of the Italian war against Ethiopia on European affairs cannot be neglected ; and it must be recalled that Mr. Eden's questionnaire of the 6th May was issued the day after the hoisting of the Italian flag in the capital of Ethiopia, a sovereign State member of the League of Nations, protected on paper by four treaties signed by Italy and by three signed by France and Britain, not to mention Red Cross and Gas Conventions. The spokesman of these Powers had an unfortunate day for the delivery of his questionnaire.

On the 7th July, 1936, Mr. Eden informed the House of Commons that he had given up expecting a reply to his questionnaire, but that he did not wish this fact to prejudice further negotiations. He wanted a five Power meeting, but the French Government—M. Blum had now taken office—demurred to the inclusion of Germany, and Italy to her exclusion. In the upshot the situation was discussed in London on the 23rd July by representatives of the French, British, and Belgian Governments ; and an invitation to a conference was issued to the two absent Powers, and communicated simultaneously to the press. It was as follows :—

The representatives of France, Belgium, and the United Kingdom, having met in London on 23rd July, 1936, mindful of the arrangement of 19th March, of the proposals of the German Chancellor of 31st March, and of those of the French Government of 8th April, have arrived at the following conclusions :

1. The main purpose to which the efforts of all European nations must be directed is to consolidate peace by means of a general settlement.

2. Such a settlement can only be achieved by the free co-operation of all the Powers concerned, and nothing would be more fatal to the hopes of such a settlement

than the division, apparent or real, of Europe into opposing blocs.

3. The three Governments accordingly consider that steps should be taken to arrange a meeting of the five Locarno Powers as soon as such a meeting can conveniently be held. The first business to be undertaken should, in their opinion, be to negotiate a new agreement to take the place of the Rhine Pact of Locarno, and to resolve, through the collaboration of all concerned, the situation created by the German initiative of 7th March.

4. The three Governments accordingly propose to enter into communication with the German and Italian Governments with a view to obtaining their participation in the meeting thus proposed.

5. If progress can be made at this meeting, other matters affecting European peace will necessarily come under discussion. In such circumstances, it would be natural to look forward to the widening of the area of the discussion in such a manner as to facilitate, with the collaboration of the other interested Powers, the settlement of those problems the solution of which is essential to the peace of Europe.

This was a conciliatory pronouncement which tactfully and rightly avoided all reference to the unanswered questionnaire; and had it been made three months earlier it might well have been an important step on the road to European appeasement. It was now too late. On the 17th July the rebellion or "civil war" had started in Spain, and it became Germany's turn to play the game of procrastination. At the end of July both Germany and Italy had agreed to the proposed conference with the proviso that there must be adequate preliminary preparation. Germany added that owing to the Olympic Games and the annual

Party Rally it would be impossible for her representatives to attend a conference before the middle of October.

Preparation of the ground was proceeding under British initiative, and a note (not published) was issued on the 19th September suggesting the end of October as a suitable time for the conference. Shortly after this, however, the League Assembly decided, contrary to Italian claims, to allow the Ethiopian delegates to retain their seats; and Signor Mussolini's distaste for co-operation with France and the United Kingdom was thereby intensified. Towards the end of October the Italian Foreign Minister visited Berlin, and the Rome-Berlin Axis came into existence (*Survey of International Affairs*, 1936, p. 363).

The summer and autumn of 1936 saw the occupation of Addis Ababa, the establishment of deadlock in European peace negotiations, the outbreak of war in Spain, and the formation of the Rome-Berlin Axis. Up to that time there had still remained some semblance of international order; thereafter scarcely a vestige has been visible. Since then no further papers have been issued on the subject of European appeasement. It was the purpose of this survey to trace the course of the decline of international order, and not to describe the subsequent manifestations of international anarchy, which are now patent for all to see. At this point, therefore, the narrative of events is concluded.

## CHAPTER XV

### CONCLUSION

WE can now see the post-war history of the problem of pacification in Europe divided into certain phases, which may be briefly summarized as follows :—

(1) 1919 to 1926. Search for guarantees of security acceptable to France, so that a start could be made on reduction and limitation of armaments. This phase ended with the execution of the Locarno Treaty in December 1925, and Germany's admission to the League, September 1926.

(2) 1926 to 1932. Relaxation of tension after Locarno. Comparatively cordial relations between the Governments of France and Germany. Preparatory Disarmament Commission at work. Situation deteriorates towards end of period.

(3) 1932 to 1934. The Disarmament Conference. Wars in progress in Far East and South America. Difficulty of reconciling Germany's enforced disarmament with her neighbours' reluctance to disarm. Resignation of Germany from the Conference and from the League. Collapse of Disarmament Conference. Clandestine rearmament of Germany. Republican régime in Germany ends, and Herr Hitler becomes the German leader and Dictator.

(4) 1934 to 1936. "Disarmament," which had now become "rearmament," discussed diplomatically. Search for new security pacts. Italy attacks and conquers Ethiopia. Tension between Italy and United Kingdom.

Germany repudiates disarmament clauses of Versailles Treaty, and introduces conscription, March 1935. United Kingdom starts rearming. Franco-Soviet Pact ratified February 1936. Germany responds by sending troops into Rhineland. General consternation. Herr Hitler puts forward so-called "peace plan" which is met by questionnaire. Deadlock.

(5) 1936 onwards. Complete deadlock on security and disarmament. Development of so-called Rome-Berlin Axis, and Rome-Berlin-Tokio Triangle. Undisguised armament race, accompanied by striking manifestations of international anarchy.

The failure to achieve appeasement after all these years of continuous endeavour suggests the persistence throughout of some fundamental defect; and it cannot be doubted that this was so. The Treaty of Versailles had imposed upon Germany an impairment of sovereignty and an inferiority of status; and every measure taken or proposed since 1919 had as a common factor, in some form or another, sometimes obvious and sometimes not, the perpetuation of this feature of the Treaty of Versailles. At no stage was there a move to take Germany back into the comity of nations on terms of equality. Through some *lacuna* in the reputed logic of the French the sins attributed in 1918-19 to the pre-war militarism of Imperial Germany were visited without alleviation on the post-war German Republic. If in the upshot Germany has preferred full sovereignty with outlawdom to impaired sovereignty with suspicious toleration—and she was offered no more, even in the heyday of Locarno—it should not be difficult for us to understand the feelings which have inspired her choice. Nor need we be surprised at the emergence of a national leader in the person of Herr Hitler.



The time has surely come to recognize that the Treaty of Versailles, hastily executed before the passions of war had died down, contained punitive features which being only accepted by a great Power under duress, could only be maintained by continued force. This does not imply a wholesale condemnation of the Treaty, still less of its authors who were called upon to solve problems of unique complexity, in circumstances where fundamental divergence of view between the principals was unavoidable, and time was an essential factor. France sought security, Britain freedom from entanglement, America the adoption of fundamental principles of equity, and Italy payment for services rendered. Outside the council chamber the ranks of the allied armies demanded early demobilization, humanitarian considerations called for suspension of the blockade of the conquered countries, whilst from Russia a strange and subversive creed was being injected into human media which the conditions of the time had rendered particularly susceptible to such infection. In the circumstances it is perhaps permissible to say that the Treaty was on the whole a successful achievement, without admitting that it must for all time and in every respect be immutable.

The Treaty was coupled with the Covenant of the League, which was based on the supposition that all nations were entitled to justice and equality of treatment, and that force was only to be used in support of principle. The settlement comprised different and entirely incompatible elements, equality for all nations and punishment with inferiority for some, self-determination for all, but strategic frontiers for some. The Covenant provided in Article 19 for the "reconsideration by Members of the League of Nations of Treaties which have become inapplicable, and the consideration of international conditions whose

continuance might endanger the peace of the world." No use has been made of this provision, and in the event the League tended to become an instrument for prolonging indefinitely the punitive character of the Treaty.

It was only natural that France in 1919 should have been moved by anger and fear towards the neighbour who had laid waste her soil and decimated her people. But reason should not have been permanently eclipsed by emotion, and it should have been realized after a few years that to keep Germany permanently in subjection was not a practical possibility, apart from the fact that it was unjust. A life sentence on a man may be just, and it can be put into execution: on a nation it could not be just, and on a great nation with the geographical situation of Germany it could not in fact be peacefully executed. There were features of the Treaty of Versailles which offended justice and common sense, and there was both justice and common sense in much that Herr Hitler had said in expounding the German point of view to unresponsive opponents.

Nor was this the first time that the Germans had spoken in this sense. On the 11th November, 1918, after the signature of the armistice, the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs appealed to President Wilson:—

This peace was meant to correspond with the principles<sup>1</sup> which the President has always maintained. Its aim was to be a just solution of all questions in dispute, followed by a permanent reconciliation of all nations. . . . We had to accept the conditions. But we feel it our duty to draw President Wilson's attention most solemnly and with all earnestness to the fact that the enforcement of these conditions must produce amongst the German

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix III. Mr Lloyd George's statement of the war aims of the Allies is given in Appendix IV.

people feelings contrary to those upon which alone the reconstruction of the community of nations can rest guaranteeing a just and durable peace.

It was perhaps too much to expect that at such a moment this representation would fall on receptive ears. Nevertheless the leading article in *The Times* of the following day sounded the note of moderation in victory :—

Our enemy is laid low, and we stand, as the Prime Minister has said, higher than we have ever stood before. It behoves us to show ourselves great in the hour of triumph ; to take large views of the immense problems with which victory confronts us and to handle them as becomes us with the calm wisdom of our fathers. When last we vindicated the liberty of the world against military despotism, there was a party in the Cabinet which desired to obtain material advantages, but the sagacity of Wellington and of Castlereagh led them to fix their gaze on the future of Europe as a whole and to repudiate demands which would have tended to subvert it.

Unfortunately, as we can now see, the statesmen of the day forgot in the stress of circumstances both the lessons of the past and the prospects of the future ; and the Treaty contained features inspired by the short-sighted vindictiveness of the moment. Those who felt uneasy about the Treaty were consoled by the incorporation therein of the Covenant of the League. They cannot have foreseen that the Covenant might come to be used as a means, not of toning down the asperities of the Treaty, but of enforcing them in perpetuity. It is easy to say that the League has failed because it was an unpractical ideal, foredoomed to failure from its inception. But it would surely be equally in accordance with the facts to say that the Treaty of Versailles has failed, that by its mode of application rather

man by its nature it was foredoomed to fail, and that it has brought down the League with it. By far the most conspicuous failure of the League was in regard to Ethiopia; and this was due, as we have seen, to the fact that the League was being worked, not in accordance with the Covenant, but in accordance with the Treaty which was interpreted to mean that Germany should be kept in perpetual subjection.

It is common to draw an antithesis between realism and idealism, and to argue that the post-war settlement represented a compromise between the realism of Clemenceau and the idealism of Wilson. Of the two elements in this compromise it was the policy of Clemenceau that prevailed throughout the post-war years, only partially relaxed during the régime of Briand, who seems to have realized that Germany could not be permanently kept in subjection; though he did not attempt to carry this realization to its only logical conclusion, a reconciliation between the peoples. There are those in high places who point to the present state of Europe as an illustration of the failure of idealism in international affairs, and who urge a return to realism. But surely even more conspicuous than the failure of the League is the failure of the "realistic" policy of Clemenceau, the permanent subjection of Germany. Looking back on the post-war years in the light of what has happened, is it not fair to say that the genuine realists of 1919 were those who inspired the policy of the Covenant? They were certainly not those who inspired the policy which has actually been followed.

If it be admitted that the Treaty of Versailles—with its preface, the Covenant of the League—is unsatisfactory in certain respects, surely the sensible procedure is to assemble the parties and reconsider it. The idealist and the realist

should at least be able to meet on the common ground of common sense. This could have been done more gracefully ten or twelve years ago, in the days of the Weimar Republic, and before the advent of the Hitler régime. There would no doubt be features in revision which would entail on some of the parties, notably ourselves, sacrifices both tangible and intangible.

The question of colonies in Africa is one which it will be impossible indefinitely to evade. It could be approached in the first instance from the point of view not of what flag is to be flown on this or that territory, but of what military use the various European nations are to make of their African possessions. Are they to be potential theatres of war, and are their populations to be trained and armed with this in view? In 1885 a convention was entered into having as its object the neutralization of the Congo and other contiguous regions. Germany in August 1914 invoked this convention, and Belgium observed it. Britain and France, however, rejected the German proposal that the colonies should remain neutral, and the European war accordingly spread over large tracts of Africa.

The following account is taken from *The War in East Africa 1914-1917 and in the Far East 1914*, H. C. O'Neill, pp. 3-4 :—

Moreover, since the Germans were bound to lose their colonies if they were to be thrown open to attack, and the allies would have this counter-balance to possible enemy gains in Europe, it was clearly to their advantage to have as many of the colonies as possible declared neutral.

Hence we find the Governor of Togoland, acting on instructions from Berlin, proposing to the British and French Governors of the adjacent colonies that these colonies should be treated as neutral. The pretext was

the undesirableness of a conflict between the white rulers. But as there can be no doubt what would have happened if the Germans had been in the majority in Africa, the proposal was brushed aside.

For the neutrality of Kamerun and German East Africa there was a more colourable pretext. The Berlin conference of 1884-85 had included a declaration favouring but not deciding the neutrality of the basin of the Congo, and interpreting it to cover nearly a third of Kamerun, the whole of German East Africa, etc.

On 23rd August, 1914, the German Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs opened negotiations through the American Ambassador in Berlin, Mr. Gerard, to obtain the neutralization of this area. The U.S. Government forwarded the suggestion without comment, and it was at once refused.

The attempt in 1885 to insulate Africa from European wars was surely a wise and humane move, and it may well be doubted whether it would not have been better on the long view if effect had been given to this policy in 1914. If some provision to prevent the militarization of Africa could be incorporated in a general European settlement, it would be to the general good of Europe as well as Africa. No greater boon could be conferred on the African peoples, and this would at the same time simplify the German colonial problem. Germany cannot expect her colonial claim to be admitted if this would merely extend the potential theatre of European war. On the other hand she could not be expected to accept restrictions on overseas possessions to which others were not subject. Some special dispensation might have to be made for France, who through long usage may be held to have established a prescriptive right to the possession of an African Army.

The fact that we took the lion's share of the German overseas possessions may well be a more potent factor in European unrest than we in this country care to admit, even to ourselves. We obviously antagonized Germany by dispossessing her, and Italy by giving her no share of these spoils. At the same time we gave ourselves a vested interest in the strict maintenance of the post-war settlement, a bias against revision, and an aversion from reconsideration of any territorial detail. France may well have counted on this to ensure our support for a policy of rigid enforcement, and thus have been encouraged to maintain the unyielding attitude which led to the downfall of the moderates in Germany, and the establishment of the present régime. Had we resisted the promptings of an instinctive and rather blind acquisitiveness, we should have been better qualified than we now are to fill with sincerity and resolution the role of mediator in Europe, a role too long vacant, and never more needed than to-day. Provided the danger of progressive militarization of Africa can be effectively guarded against, and as part of a general settlement, there seems no valid reason why this country should be ashamed to follow the precedent set by Wellington and Castlereagh, and seek, as they did, in the imponderable currency of appeasement an adequate recompense for a measure of material restitution. Some of the smouldering embers of the last war were imbedded in the Treaty of Versailles; and they glow again more brightly as the years pass without a real effort to quench them. Can we say that we are not responsible for any of them; and, if they should burst into flame again, shall we be able to feel that the outbreak is due to no fault of ours?

If intensive rearmament is permissible in the circumstances of the time, then it is surely no less permissible to think aloud as to the purpose to which these armaments may

be applied, and the causes which may lead to their use. Are those features of the Treaty of Versailles which Germany regards as humiliating and unjust to be rigidly upheld even to the point of war? On what principle was Turkey allowed to abrogate the dictated Treaty of Sèvres, and replace it by the negotiated Treaty of Lausanne; and does not the subsequent history of Turkey provide an object lesson in the superior merits of a negotiated treaty? Are we to fight a war for the purpose of keeping a numerous, virile, and competent people in a state of subjection which we ourselves would find intolerable? There are points about Herr Hitler's methods which we can only deplore; but it is fair to recall that his country has been offered no other status in Europe but that of Public Enemy Number One. We must acknowledge that he has put forward peace plans which have been countered by sterile questionnaires, and overtures for a psychological *détente* which have been rebuffed. From France and Britain there has come no peace plan other than rigid enforcement of the Treaty of Versailles. Whatever may be the final verdict of history on war-guilt in 1914, it will be impossible to place the entire onus upon Germany if another war should break out.

It would be beyond the competence of any lay analyst of these matters, and beyond the aims of the writer of this study, to propound a complete solution of all the problems which have been examined in these pages. On the other hand it is unreasonable that a commentary on any subject should be purely unconstructive. If in the narrative of events which has been given, and the comments which have been made, the British Government do not appear to have played at all times a wise and worthy part, the just inference is that it is all the more necessary that they should do so now. We cannot claim that our actions have been impeccable,



and we must frankly assume our full share of responsibility for the dangers with which Europe is now beset. We have great possessions in material form, and in accumulated knowledge of statecraft on a world-wide scale; and our Government can call upon the services of men of unrivalled experience and the highest repute. We are still widely credited in Europe with fair-mindedness and common sense, though we have no right to think that our reputation in these respects has suffered no decline in recent years; and there are many who still look anxiously to us for leadership. Through our relationship with Canada and the United States we form the cultural and political bridge across the Atlantic; though we should have no desire to inflict upon the American Continent any share of troubles which originate in Europe. Surely then it is for us to initiate a genuine endeavour to seek out and remedy the deep-seated causes of European unrest and fear.

Of such endeavour there is so far no sign. At the present moment by far the most conspicuous feature of the European scene is the ceaseless fabrication of engines of war, and of the munitions to feed them. The destructive potential of those already assembled must be enough to wreck the chief cities of Europe, and to destroy the material fabric of modern civilization, together with the artistic treasures and historical records of the past. The whole mechanism is of such a nature that it hangs upon a hair-trigger, liable to be released by a single hasty or incautious touch. The peoples of Europe have a right to demand of the statesmen now in control of their destiny that their heritage of civilization be not destroyed by a senseless perversion of scientific discovery and industrial technique; and for no reason that any ordinary man can regard as valid, or that any statesman is prepared openly to avow. It is surely an intolerable thought

that our recently acquired ability to control the forces of nature and to utilize the resources of the earth, an ability sufficient to ensure a decent standard of living for all, is now to be used for the mass suicide of Europe. Even those who would deny that ethical standards have any place in international affairs must admit that this would indeed be a stupid and preposterous incident in the life history of a branch of the animal world that calls itself *Homo Sapiens*.

LONDON. *August* 1938.

## POSTSCRIPT

Widespread preparation for war, and a succession of serious developments abroad, so greatly fill the field of vision to-day that they obscure the fact that no effort is being made to adjust the troubles of Europe by peaceful means. Mr. Chamberlain said on March 31st "there should be no question incapable of solution by peaceful means." So far no response has been evoked abroad, and in totalitarian countries there is only one voice which can respond. A peaceful solution will not come without a definite initiative, resolutely directed towards that end. All previous experience shows that it is war and not peace that issues automatically from a state of tension. Surely therefore there should now be a strenuous endeavour to find a peaceful issue as an alternative to a war which, it cannot be doubted, must destroy Europe. It is not yet too late, but there is no time to lose, and it is for our statesmen to take the initiative. No other Power is better qualified than Britain to take the lead in this matter, and we should not shirk this duty to the peoples of Europe.

Scrutiny of the record of events from 1918 onwards forbids the belief that all right is on one side, and all wrong on the other. Responsibility for the disintegration of international order cannot be placed on one statesman, or on one government, or on the governments of one group of countries. Others must take their share, and not least those who, like ourselves, were charged with formulating and implementing the settlement of 1919. A conspicuous need of the moment is the avoidance of mutual recrimination, and of

the search for one or more scapegoats upon whom the troubles of Europe may be blamed retrospectively, regardless of chronological sequence. There has been no monopoly of unwisdom, of undertakings unfulfilled, or of acts and omissions tending to undermine the foundations of international order. This fact should not be lost sight of in the indignation justly aroused by recent deeds of brigandage and broken faith ; and there should be on our side neither evasion of responsibility, nor reluctance to take the initiative at this critical time.

*25th April, 1939.*



## APPENDICES

- I. Covenant of the League of Nations. (Preamble and Articles 8 to 20.)
- II. Kellogg-Briand Pact.
- III. President Wilson's Fourteen Points of the 8th January, 1918, and subsequent points of the 11th February, 4th July, and 27th September, 1918.
- IV. Mr. Lloyd George's Peace Declaration of the 5th January, 1918.
- V. Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Agreement.



## APPENDIX I

### THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

(The substance of the Covenant is contained in the Articles reproduced below)

THE High Contracting Parties,

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security—

by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war,  
by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations,

by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments,

and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all Treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another.

agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

#### ARTICLE 8

The Members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety, and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.

The Council, taking account of the geographical situation and circumstances of each State, shall formulate plans for such reduction for the consideration and action of the several Governments.

Such plans shall be subject to reconsideration and revision at least every ten years.

After these plans shall have been adopted by the several Governments, the limits of armaments therein fixed shall not be exceeded without the concurrence of the Council.

The Members of the League agree that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions and implements of war is open to grave objec-



tions. The Council shall advise how the evil effects attendant upon such manufacture can be prevented, due regard being had to the necessities of those Members of the League which are not able to manufacture the munitions and implements of war necessary for their safety.

The Members of the League undertake to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments, their military, naval and air programmes and the condition of such of their industries as are adaptable to warlike purposes.

#### ARTICLE 9

A permanent Commission shall be constituted to advise the Council on the execution of the provisions of Articles 1 and 8 and on military, naval and air questions generally.

#### ARTICLE 10

The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve, as against external aggression, the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression, the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.

#### ARTICLE 11

Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise, the Secretary-General shall, on the request of any Member of the League, forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.

#### ARTICLE 12

The Members of the League agree that, if there should arise

between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture they will submit the matter either to arbitration *or judicial settlement* or to enquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators *or the judicial decision*, or the report by the Council.

In any case, under this Article the award of the arbitrators *or the judicial decision* shall be made within a reasonable time, and the report of the Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.

### ARTICLE 13

The Members of the League agree that, whenever any dispute shall arise between them which they recognize to be suitable for submission to arbitration *or judicial settlement*, and which cannot be satisfactorily settled by diplomacy, they will submit the whole subject-matter to arbitration *or judicial settlement*.

Disputes as to the interpretation of a Treaty, as to any question of international law, as to the existence of any fact which, if established, would constitute a breach of any international obligation, or as to the extent and nature of the reparation to be made for any such breach, are declared to be among those which are generally suitable for submission to arbitration *or judicial settlement*.

*For the consideration of any such dispute, the Court to which the case is referred shall be the Permanent Court of International Justice, established in accordance with Article 14, or any tribunal agreed on by the parties to the dispute or stipulated in any Convention existing between them.*

The Members of the League agree that they will carry out in full good faith any award *or decision* that may be rendered, and that they will not resort to war against a Member of the League which complies therewith. In the event of any failure to carry out such an award *or decision*, the Council shall propose what steps should be taken to give effect thereto.

### ARTICLE 14

The Council shall formulate and submit to the Members of the League for adoption plans for the establishment of a Permanent Court

The amendments printed in italics came into force on the 26th September, 1924, in accordance with Article 26 of the Covenant

of International Justice. The Court shall be competent to hear and determine any dispute of an international character which the parties thereto submit to it. The Court may also give an advisory opinion upon any dispute or question referred to it by the Council or by the Assembly.

#### ARTICLE 15

If there should arise between Members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration or *judicial settlement* in accordance with Article 13, the Members of the League agree that they will submit the matter to the Council. Any party to the dispute may effect such submission by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the Secretary-General, who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof.

For this purpose the parties to the dispute will communicate to the Secretary-General, as promptly as possible, statements of their case with all the relevant facts and papers, and the Council may forthwith direct the publication thereof.

The Council shall endeavour to effect a settlement of the dispute, and, if such efforts are successful, a statement shall be made public giving such facts and explanations regarding the dispute and the terms of settlement thereof as the Council may deem appropriate.

If the dispute is not thus settled, the Council, either unanimously or by a majority vote, shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto.

Any Member of the League represented on the Council may make a public statement of the facts of the dispute and of its conclusions regarding the same.

If a report by the Council is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report.

If the Council fails to reach a report which is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League reserve to

themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice.

If the dispute between the parties is claimed by one of them, and is found by the Council to arise out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, the Council shall report, and shall make no recommendation as to its settlement.

The Council may in any case under this Article refer the dispute to the Assembly. The dispute shall be so referred at the request of either party to the dispute provided that such request be made within fourteen days after the submission of the dispute to the Council.

In any case referred to the Assembly, all the provisions of this Article and of Article 12, relating to the action and powers of the Council, shall apply to the action and powers of the Assembly, provided that a report made by the Assembly, if concurred in by the representatives of those Members of the League represented on the Council, and of a majority of the other Members of the League, exclusive in each case of the representatives of the parties to the dispute, shall have the same force as a report by the Council concurred in by all the members thereof other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute.

#### ARTICLE 16

Should any member of the League resort to war in disregard of its Covenants under Articles 12, 13 or 15, it shall ipso facto be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the Covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the Covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not.

It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the Covenants of the League.

The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are

taken under this Article, in order to minimize the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the Covenant-breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the Covenants of the League.

Any Member of the League which has violated any Covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a Member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the representatives of all the other Members of the League represented thereon.

#### ARTICLE 17

In the event of a dispute between a Member of the League and a State which is not a Member of the League, or between States not Members of the League, the State or States not Members of the League shall be invited to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, upon such conditions as the Council may deem just. If such invitation is accepted, the provisions of Articles 12 to 16 inclusive shall be applied with such modifications as may be deemed necessary to the Council.

Upon such invitation being given, the Council shall immediately institute an enquiry into the circumstances of the dispute and recommend such action as may seem best and most effectual in the circumstances.

If a State so invited shall refuse to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, and shall resort to war against a Member of the League, the provisions of Article 16 shall be applicable as against the State taking such action.

If both parties to the dispute, when so invited, refuse to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, the Council may take such measures and make such recommendations as will prevent hostilities and will result in the settlement of the dispute.

#### ARTICLE 18

Every Treaty or international engagement entered into hereafter by any Member of the League shall be forthwith registered with the

Secretariat, and shall, as soon as possible, be published by it. No such Treaty or international engagement shall be binding until so registered.

## ARTICLE 19

The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of Treaties which have become inapplicable, and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world.

## ARTICLE 20

The Members of the League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings *inter se* which are inconsistent with the terms thereof, and solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms thereof.

In case any Member of the League shall, before becoming a Member of the League, have undertaken any obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant, it shall be the duty of such member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.

## APPENDIX II

### INTERNATIONAL TREATY FOR THE RENUNCIATION OF WAR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY

(Usually referred to as the Pact of Paris, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, or the Kellogg Pact)

#### ARTICLE I

THE High Contracting Parties solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.

#### ARTICLE II

The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.

#### ARTICLE III

The present Treaty shall be ratified by the High Contracting Parties named in the Preamble in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements and shall take effect as between them as soon as all their several instruments of ratification shall have been deposited at Washington. . . .

(H.B.M.'s Ratification deposited 2nd March, 1929. The Treaty came into force on 24th July, 1929.)

## APPENDIX III

### WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS

(Extract from President Wilson's address to Congress of 8th January, 1918)

I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest co-operation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and more than a welcome, assistance of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their goodwill, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated



and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they themselves have set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is for ever impaired.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

XI. Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual-guarantees of

political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

Extracts from the address of President Wilson to Congress, 11th February, 1918.

#### THE FOUR PRINCIPLES

"What we are striving for is a new international order based upon the broad and universal principles of right and justice. . . ."

"There shall be no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages."

"The principles to be applied are these:—

"First, that each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent.

"Second, that peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game now for ever discredited of the balance of power; but that,

"Third, every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival States.

Fourth, that all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe, and consequently of the world.

Extracts from the address of President Wilson to Congress on the 4th July, 1918.

#### FOUR GREAT AIMS OF THE ALLIES

THESE are the ends for which the associated peoples of the world are

fighting and which must be conceded them before there can be peace :—

First, the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world ; or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at the least its reduction to virtual impotence.

Second, the settlement of every question, whether of territory or sovereignty, of economic arrangement or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.

Third, the consent of all nations to be governed in their conduct towards each other by the same principles of honour and of respect for the common law of civilized society that govern the individual citizen of all modern States, and in their relations with one another to the end that all promises and covenants may be sacredly observed, no private plots or conspiracies hatched, no selfish injuries wrought with impunity and a mutual trust established upon the handsome foundation of a mutual respect for right.

Fourth, the establishment of an organization of peace which shall make it certain that the combined power of free nations will check every invasion of right, and serve to make peace and justice the more secure by affording a definite tribunal of opinion to which all must submit, and by which every international readjustment that cannot be amicably agreed upon by the peoples directly concerned shall be sanctioned.

These great objects can be put into a single sentence. What we seek is the reign of law based upon the consent of the governed, and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind. These great ends cannot be achieved by debating and seeking to reconcile and accommodate what statesmen may wish, with their projects for balances of power and of national opportunity. They can be realized only by the determination of what the thinking peoples of the world desire, with their longing hope for justice and for social freedom and opportunity.

Extracts from the address of President Wilson on the 27th September,  
1918.

But these general terms do not disclose the whole matter. Some details are needed to make them sound less like a thesis and more like a practical programme. These then are some of the particulars, and I can state them with the greater confidence because I can state them authoritatively as representing this Government's interpretation of its own duty with regards to peace:—

#### FIVE CONDITIONS

First, the impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that plays no favourites and knows no standards but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.

Second, no special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all.

Third, there can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations.

Fourth, and more specifically, there can be no special, selfish economic combinations within the League, and no employment of any form of economic boycott or exclusion, except as the power of economic penalty, by exclusion from the markets of the world, may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control.

Fifth, all international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world.

Special alliance and economic rivalries and hostilities have been the prolific source in the modern world of the plans and passions that produce war. It would be an insincere as well as an insecure peace that did not exclude them in definite and binding terms.

The confidence with which I venture to speak for our people in these matters does not spring from our traditions merely, and the well-known principles of international action which we have always professed and followed. In the same sentence in which I say that the

United States will enter into no special arrangements or understandings with particular nations let me say also that the United States is prepared to assume its full share of responsibility for the maintenance of the common covenants and understandings upon which peace must henceforth rest.

We still read Washington's immortal warning against "entangling alliances" with full comprehension and an answering purpose. But only special and limited alliances entangle: and we recognize and accept the duty of a new day in which we are permitted to hope for a general alliance, which will avoid entanglements and clear the air of the world for common understandings and the maintenance of common rights.

. . . . .

## APPENDIX IV

### BRITISH PEACE DECLARATION

Extracts from Mr. Lloyd George's speech on the 5th January, 1918  
(War Memoirs of David Lloyd George. V. p. 2515-2527).

I AM glad to be able to say as a result of all these discussions that although the Government are alone responsible for the actual language I propose using, there is national agreement as to the character and purpose of our war aims and peace conditions, and in what I say to you to-day, and through you to the world, I can venture to claim that I am speaking not merely the mind of the Government but of the nation and of the Empire as a whole.

We may begin by clearing away some misunderstandings and stating what we are *not* fighting for. We are not fighting a war of aggression against the German people. Their leaders have persuaded them that they are fighting a war of self-defence against a league of rival nations bent on the destruction of Germany. That is not so. The destruction or disruption of Germany or the German people has never been a war aim with us from the first day of this war to this hour. Most reluctantly and, indeed quite unprepared for the dreadful ordeal, we were forced to join in this war in self-defence, in defence of the violated public law of Europe, and in vindication of the most solemn treaty obligations on which the public system of Europe rested, and on which Germany had ruthlessly trampled in her invasion of Belgium. We had to join in the struggle or stand aside and see Europe go under and brute force triumph over public right and international justice. It was only the realization of that dreadful alternative that forced the British people into the War. And from that original attitude they have never swerved. They have never aimed at the break-up of the German peoples or the disintegration of their country or Empire. Germany has occupied a great position in the world. It is not our wish or intention to question or destroy that position for the future, but rather to turn her aside from hopes and schemes of military domination and to see her devote all her strength to the great beneficent tasks

of humanity. Nor are we fighting to destroy Austria-Hungary or to deprive Turkey of its capital, or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace, which are predominantly Turkish in race.

Nor did we enter this war merely to alter or destroy the Imperial constitution of Germany, much as we consider that military autocratic constitution a dangerous anachronism in the twentieth century. Our point of view is that the adoption of a really democratic constitution by Germany would be the most convincing evidence that in her the old spirit of military domination had indeed died in this war, and would make it much easier for us to conclude a broad democratic peace with her. But, after all, that is a question for the German people to decide. . . . We must know what is meant, for equality of right among nations, small as well as great, is one of the fundamental issues this country and her Allies are fighting to establish in this war. . . .

The days of the Treaty of Vienna are long past. We can no longer submit the future of European civilization to the arbitrary decisions of a few negotiators striving to secure by chicanery or persuasion the interests of this or that dynasty or nation. The settlement of the new Europe must be based on such grounds of reason and justice as will give some promise of stability. *Therefore it is that we feel that government with the consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this war.* For that reason also, unless treaties be upheld, unless every nation is prepared at whatever sacrifice to honour the national signature, it is obvious that no Treaty of Peace can be worth the paper on which it is written.

The first requirement, therefore, always put forward by the British Government and their Allies, has been the complete restoration, political, territorial and economic, of the independence of Belgium and such reparation as can be made for the devastation of its towns and provinces. This is no demand for a war indemnity such as that imposed on France by Germany in 1871. It is not an attempt to shift the cost of warlike operations from one belligerent to another, which may or may not be defensible. It is no more and no less than an insistence that before there can be any hope for a stable peace, this great breach of the public law of Europe must be repudiated, and, so far as possible, repaired. Reparation means recognition. Unless international right is recognized by insistence on payment for injury done in defiance of its canons it can never be a reality. Next comes

the restoration of Serbia, Montenegro, and the occupied parts of France, Italy and Roumania. The complete withdrawal of the alien armies and the reparation for injustice done is a fundamental condition of permanent peace.

We mean to stand by the French democracy to the death in the demand they make for a reconsideration of the great wrong of 1871, when, without any regard to the wishes of the population, two French provinces were torn from the side of France and incorporated in the German Empire. This sore has poisoned the peace of Europe for half a century, and until it is cured healthy conditions will not have been restored. There can be no better illustration of the folly and wickedness of using a transient military success to violate national right. . . . It is desirable, and indeed essential, that the settlement after this war shall be one which does not in itself bear the seeds of future war. But that is not enough. However wisely and well we may make territorial and other arrangements, there will still be many subjects of international controversy. Some indeed are inevitable. . . .

Apart from this, whatever settlement is made will be suitable only to the circumstances under which it is made, and, as those circumstances change, changes in the settlement will be called for.

So long as the possibility of dispute between nations continues, that is to say, so long as men and women are dominated by passionate ambition, and war is the only means of settling a dispute, all nations must live under the burden not only of having from time to time to engage in it, but of being compelled to prepare for its possible outbreak. The crushing weight of modern armaments, the increasing evil of compulsory military service, the vast waste of wealth and effort involved in warlike preparation, these are blots on our civilization of which every thinking individual must be ashamed.

For these and other similar reasons, we are confident that a great attempt must be made to establish by some international organization an alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes. After all war is a relic of barbarism, and, just as law has succeeded violence as the means of settling disputes between individuals, so we believe that it is destined ultimately to take the place of war in the settlement of controversies between nations.

If, then, we are asked what are we fighting for, we reply, as we have often replied: We are fighting for a just and a lasting peace, and we



believe that before permanent peace can be hoped for three conditions must be fulfilled.

First, the sanctity of treaties must be re-established; secondly, a territorial settlement must be secured based on the right of self-determination or the consent of the governed; and, lastly, we must seek by the creation of some international organization to limit the burden of armaments and diminish the probability of war.

In these conditions the British Empire would welcome peace, to secure those conditions its peoples are prepared to make even greater sacrifices than those they have yet endured.

## APPENDIX V

Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Agreement, 2nd May, 1935.  
(Ratified 27th February 1936.)

### ARTICLE 1

In the event of France or the U.S.S.R. being threatened with, or in danger of, attack on the part of a European State, the U.S.S.R., and, reciprocally, France, undertake to proceed mutually to immediate consultation as regards the measures to be taken for the observance of the provisions of article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

### ARTICLE 2

In the event of France or the U.S.S.R., in the circumstances specified in article 15, paragraph 7, of the League of Nations Covenant, being the object, in spite of the genuinely peaceful intentions of both countries, of an unprovoked attack on the part of a European State, the U.S.S.R., and, reciprocally, France, shall immediately give each other aid and assistance.

### ARTICLE 3

In consideration of the fact that under article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations any member of the League who has recourse to war contrary to the obligations undertaken in articles 12, 13 and 15 of the Covenant is *ipso facto* considered as having committed an act of war against all the other members of the League, France and, reciprocally, the U.S.S.R. undertake in the event of one of them being the object, in these circumstances and in spite of the genuinely peaceful intentions of both countries, of an unprovoked attack on the part of a European State, to give each other immediately aid and assistance in execution of article 16 of the Covenant.

The same obligation is assumed in the event of France or the U.S.S.R. being the object of an attack on the part of a European State in the circumstances specified in article 17, paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

### ARTICLE 4

The obligations laid down above being in conformity with the

obligations of the high contracting parties as members of the League of Nations, nothing in the present treaty shall be interpreted as restricting the mission of the League to take appropriate measures to safeguard effectively the peace of the world or as restricting the obligations laid upon the high contracting parties by the Covenant of the League of Nations.

#### ARTICLE 5

The present treaty, of which both the French and Russian texts are equally valid, shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification exchanged at Moscow as soon as possible. It shall be registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

It shall come into force as soon as the ratifications have been exchanged, and shall remain in force for five years. If it has not been denounced by either of the high contracting parties giving notice of denunciation at least one year before the expiration of this period, it shall remain in force for an unlimited period, each of the high contracting parties being at liberty to terminate it at a year's notice by a declaration to that effect.

#### PROTOCOL OF SIGNATURE

At the moment of proceeding to the signature of the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Agreement of to-day's date, the plenipotentiaries have signed the following protocol, which shall be included in the exchange of ratifications of the treaty:—

1. It is agreed that the effect of article 3 is to compel each contracting party immediately to give assistance to the other by complying forthwith with the recommendations of the Council of the League of Nations as soon as they shall have been made in accordance with article 16 of the Covenant. It is further agreed that the two contracting parties will take joint action to ensure that the Council issue their recommendations with all the speed required by the circumstances of the case, and that, should the Council nevertheless, for some reason, make no recommendation or fail to reach a unanimous decision, effect shall nevertheless be given to the obligation to render assistance. It is also agreed that the provisions for mutual assistance embodied in this treaty refer only to the case of an attack on either of the contracting parties' own territory.

